



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
September 4 – 11, 2015

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Wounded Healer: documentary explores scarred past of Métis role model

'I made a decision to change my life and devote my life to helping people,' says Roland Vandal

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2015 8:00 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 06, 2015 10:16 AM ET



Last year, Roland Vandal was honoured as a community leader by the province of Manitoba. Yet only twelve years ago, the Métis man was addicted to drugs, involved with organized crime and ready to take his own life.

Vandal's incredible journey is the subject of a new documentary airing on CBC this Saturday.

Wounded Healer: The Roland Vandal Story was produced and directed by Winnipeg filmmaker Jim Agapito, a longtime friend and fellow boxer.

"I followed him for two and a half years," Agapito says.

"He's my buddy and he's my pal but I really got to know his life story."



Wounded Healer: The Roland Vandal Story airs on Absolutely Manitoba Saturday, September 5 at 7 p.m. on CBC TV in Manitoba. (Supplied)

Through interviews and footage of his motivational talks, the documentary shows Vandal's transformation from child of an alcoholic father, to professional boxer, to drug-addicted gangster and finally father and role model.

Vandal speaks with brutal honesty throughout the film — even when relating the story of his sexual abuse at the hands of a former boxing coach and when he attempted to take his own life with drugs.

It was a moment that set Vandal on a completely different path.

"I just got up that day and I made a decision to change my life and devote my life to helping people," he says.

"There's nothing that gets in the way of helping others."

Wounded Healer airs on Absolutely Manitoba this Saturday, Sept. 5 at 7 p.m. on CBC TV in Manitoba.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/wounded-healer-documentary-explores-scarred-past-of-m%C3%A9tis-role-model-1.3216423>

Artists, curators, residents gather to celebrate Inuit art

“I’m taking home a goose feet basket a friend made in the workshop”

THOMAS ROHNER, September 10, 2015 - 9:30 am



Artists, presenters and organizers of the 2015 NACA Arts Festival pose in the Rankin Inlet community centre Aug. 26. (PHOTO COURTESY NACA)



Baskets, like the one pictured above made by Igah Hainnu of Clyde River, were all the rage at this year's NACA Arts Festival in Rankin Inlet. This basket is made of duck feet, but the baskets Hainnu showed fellow artists and festival-goers in Rankin Inlet incorporated geese feet. (PHOTO BY GORETTI KAKUKTINNIQ FACEBOOK)



Sherlyn Kadjuk shows off the goose foot she successfully skinned at a basket-making workshop held by Igah Hainnu of Clyde River at the 2015 NACA Arts Festival in Rankin Inlet from Aug. 20 to 26. (PHOTO COURTESY NACA)

So what has six feet, used to honk and now draws crowds at Nunavut art festivals?

Give up? A basket made from three pairs of geese feet, of course.

The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association held its annual arts festival in Rankin Inlet from Aug. 20 to Aug. 26, an event that included more than 30 artists from around Nunavut, art lovers from around the world and art workshops open to the public.

And the hottest item everyone seemed to be talking about this year were Igah Hainnu's baskets made from the skinned feet of geese.

"I didn't even know about goose-feet basket weaving. That was something completely new to me," Stefan St-Laurent, a gallery curator from Gatineau, Que., told *Nunatsiaq News* in a recent interview.

"One of the most successful workshops was making baskets with goose feet," said Theresie Tungilik, a festival organizer from Rankin Inlet.

"I'm taking home a goose feet basket a friend made in the workshop," said Martha Cerny, owner and operator of a museum in Bern, Switzerland.

Cerny said what impressed her about the baskets was the traditional approach, contemporary application and the sustainability of an art form that uses what others might throw away.

"This is not a throw-away society, as we call it. They're trying to make do with what they have."

Hainnu, from Clyde River, told *Nunatsiaq News* Sept. 8 that her grandmother showed her how to make the baskets some 30 years ago.

"Back then, they had no little bags where they could put stuff like wicks for their qulliq, or little wooden dolls — the little belongings they had, they needed some kind of bag to store them in," Hainnu said from her home on north Baffin.

"They were trying to think of ways of making bags out of anything, so that was one way: they could make bags out of bird feet."

Hainnu, recently elected for a two-year term as chairperson of NACA's board of directors, explained that it usually takes six webbed feet from three birds to make a basket.

"I use snow goose or Canada goose. Those are the two main ones because they're bigger."

But sometimes, Hainnu said she'll use duck feet to make pen holders for office desks.

“And just to make it look fancier, you add sealskin.”

Tungilik, who is also a Rankin Inlet hamlet councillor, said the NACA arts festival started meeting in communities outside Iqaluit two years ago.

Last year, NACA held the festival in [Cambridge Bay](#).

“When it’s closer to people’s home, they want to be involved. This year it was in beautiful Rankin Inlet and we made it a blast, with lots of activities planned during the day and evening,” Tungilik said.

The event is a financial boost as well, not only for Nunavut artists but for the local economy, as airlines, hotels and restaurants enjoy a surge in business, Tungilik said.

“I think the artists had a really good time, not only because of their sales, but because the workshops we added... helped them learn new techniques and skills.”

St-Laurent, who curates the AXENEO7 gallery in Gatineau, said the sense of community and camaraderie between artists stood out and made for a better learning environment.

“We’re not used to seeing that kind of atmosphere in the South, where people are much more competitive and secretive in sharing their techniques.”

St-Laurent gave a presentation at the festival on emerging trends in contemporary art from around the world and where Nunavut fits into that canon.

“There’s a really strong interest in what’s coming out of Nunavut today,” he said. “Museums are really seeking out artists that aren’t necessarily making work that you would typically think comes out of the North.”

Cerny, who also attended last year’s festival in Cambridge Bay, would probably agree with St-Laurent.

Her Swiss museum, called Cerny Inuit Collection, will travel with an exhibit to Monaco this fall to feature Inuit artists alongside Italian and Swiss artists.

The exhibit, Cerny said, aims to focus attention on how artists in the North are depicting their impressions of climate change, and drawing a link to climate change ideas expressed by artists from the European alpine.

But for Cerny, the highlight of this year’s festival — the seventh or eighth NACA festival she’s attended — was the hands-on learning at the workshops.

“My highlight was being able to have contact in one place with so many people from different parts of Nunavut. All those different views in one place, without having to travel to each community.”

Hainnu agrees with that.

“It never hurts to learn new things. Doing art, you get better ideas doing lots of things. And it’s even better when you try them out, hands on,” Hainnu said.

Next year’s festival will likely be in the Baffin region, Hainnu added, but a community has not been selected yet.

And the success of this year’s festival is largely due to the “strong” and “reliable” NACA staff, she said.

“They’re so supportive to artists in Nunavut, they’re awesome.”

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674artists_curators_residents_gather_to_celebrate_inuit_art/

Anishinaabe author, historian Basil H. Johnston dies at 86

Johnson was 'an Anishinaabe giant, leaves a tremendous legacy,' says Hayden King

By Tim Fontaine, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 10, 2015 12:26 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 10, 2015 6:04 PM ET



Anishinaabe author, historian Basil H. Johnston. (Anishinabek News)

Basil H. Johnston, respected author, storyteller and preserver of the Anishnaabe language, has died. He was 86 years old.

"He was a ground breaker," said Cree playwright and fellow author Tomson Highway.

"We wouldn't have been able to do what we are doing today, this current generation of writers, including myself, without people like him coming before us."

Born in 1929 on the Wasauksing First Nation, Johnston was a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation in Ontario.

First published in the 1970s, he went on to author 25 books and often wrote about Anishinaabe history. Five of his books were written in Anishinabemowin, the language of the Anishinaabe.

In addition to his writing career, Johnston worked at the Royal Ontario Museum in the Department of Ethnology for over two decades. He also taught high school and was a lecturer at universities and colleges in both Ontario and Saskatchewan.

Throughout his life, Johnston was honoured with many awards and accolades for his work. He was a recipient of the Order of Ontario and received the 2004 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Heritage and Spirituality.

"He was a treasure trove to the community and true keeper of the language," said Gregory Nawash, chief of the Chippewas of Nawash.

"Basil learned very early in life that knowledge is power."

News of Basil's passing triggered a flood of condolences online by some of those indigenous writers and artists.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/anishinaabe-author-historian-basil-h-johnston-dies-at-86-1.3222485>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Ottawa backs off as First Nations ignore transparency law deadline

About 30% of First Nations remain non-compliant despite threat to withhold non-essential funding

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2015 3:06 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 04, 2015 4:47 PM CT



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde calls the Transparency Act punitive and prejudicial. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)

The federal government appears to be hedging on its threat to hold back non-essential funding from First Nations that didn't disclose financial information online, at least for now.

The deadline for First Nations to post their financial information online came and went on Tuesday, and days later about a third have yet to submit their financial reports.

"The department and minister are committed to working with First Nation communities to determine why they are unable to be compliant," said Tory MP Kelly Block. "That's the first step before we would move to the second step of withholding funding for non-essential services."

First Nation financial disclosure became mandatory last year under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, a law authored by Block, but it remains unclear what "non-essential services" entail and how much funding could be cut.

Block's explanation? "What is deemed non-essential is anything that has not been identified as essential."

In Manitoba, about 65 per cent of the province's First Nations have not complied with the new legislation.

Brokenhead First Nation is one of them, and while they are planning to submit those numbers, Chief Jim Bear said they aren't happy about it.

"If we're going to be going into competition on a similar venture with whoever — whether it's in the community or off the community — those individuals will have access to our financial situation," he said. "We don't have access to their financial information. It puts us in an uneven [position]."

The new law also requires First Nations to post revenues from non-taxpayer-supported enterprises, such as band businesses, which Bear says is out of bounds.

"We're more than willing to post what the federal government, in terms of revenue, they give us. We're willing to be transparent there," Bear said. "But when we have our own source funding — whether it's from the casino, from VLTs, from our stores or other businesses — that should be up to us, the government and our own people, not the general public."

That complaint is being echoed across the country. As of Friday, 182 First Nations were in non-compliance.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde said the legislation is punitive and prejudicial.

"I think it's pretty heavy-handed and that needs to be revisited because you're basically hurting communities that are very poor," he said. "In a lot of cases, you're not going to continue operations."

Canada's Department of Aboriginal Affairs did not respond to requests for comment.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/ottawa-backs-off-as-first-nations-ignore-transparency-law-deadline-1.3216490>

B.C. premier calls on First Nations to drive economic and social ties



British Columbia Premier Christy Clark addresses a gathering of First Nations leaders and B.C. cabinet ministers in Vancouver, on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015. (Darryl Dyck / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Dirk Meissner, The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, September 10, 2015 5:15PM EDT

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VANCOUVER -- Leaders of British Columbia's First Nations came looking for a home run but left meetings with Premier Christy Clark and her cabinet wondering if they even made it to first base.

At least a year will have to pass before the leaders will know if they cleared the fence or hit a sacrifice bunt while trying to resolve historic land rights with the government, said Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit, one of B.C.'s largest aboriginal groups.

Hundreds of First Nations' leaders approved on Thursday a 12-page reconciliation document that is being billed as a guide for future economic, social and legal relations between aboriginals and the province.



British Columbia Premier Christy Clark, right, greets Chief Michael LeBourdais, of the Whispering Pines-Clinton Indian Band in the Shuswap First Nation near Kamloops, B.C., after addressing a gathering of First Nations leaders and B.C. cabinet ministers in Vancouver, on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015. (Darryl Dyck / THE CANADIAN PRESS)



Chief Roger William, of the Tsilhqot'in First Nation, stands next to a mockup of a highway sign with English and the traditional names of towns signed by B.C. Premier Christy Clark, after a gathering of First Nations leaders and B.C. cabinet ministers in Vancouver, on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015. (Darryl Dyck / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

"The commitment is really there," said John who called the talks constructive and positive. "Now we need to dig down and do the actions that are necessary to followup. Last year we kind of fell apart."

"We are going to have our disagreements and that is absolutely true, and that disagreement fundamentally is about the land itself and the right of First Nations to the land," he said.

Clark said her government supports the document.

She called on First Nations to become the driving force behind the wide-ranging agreement that forges a stronger economic and social partnership between First Nations and British Columbians.

"I have heard from you loud and clear you see reconciliation as something unique to your communities," she said at the conclusion of a two-day gathering in Vancouver. "We need to go down the path of reconciliation."

The document states the goals and objectives of reconciliation include "Achieving predictability and stability in the economy, and closing the socio-economic gap that persists between First Nations and non-First Nations."

Clark said reconciliation involves improving the lives of families, especially children. She said the images of the dead Syrian boy on a beach hit her as a parent and hit the parents of First Nations even harder.

"In seeing Alan Kurdi there, we saw our own children," she said. "Every parent knows that sense of fragility. The number of First Nations' children who find their way into government care is a problem across the country."

She pledged to hold a meeting to discuss aboriginal children's issues in the coming months and vowed to ensure the federal government will send representatives to next year's chiefs' gathering.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, said the government is currently at Strike 2 when it comes to reconciliation, and if there is no significant movement over the next year, First Nations will return to legal challenges and protest camps.

"Today was a step," said Shane Gottfriedson, B.C. Assembly of First Nations' regional chief. "This gathering gave me the confidence there is a way forward."

Aboriginal relations Minister John Rustad said he could not put a deadline on reaching reconciliation.

"It's not about a destination," he said. "It really is about a journey."

First Nations -- buoyed by the Supreme Court of Canada land rights victory in central B.C. -- want more say and revenue sharing on proposed resource projects on land they consider their territory.

Most of B.C.'s major development projects, including the Site C hydroelectric dam and the Kinder Morgan and Northern Gateway pipeline projects, already face court challenges from First Nations.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/b-c-premier-calls-on-first-nations-to-drive-economic-and-social-ties-1.2557188>

Two northeastern First Nations could face funding freeze

[William Stodalka](#) / Alaska Highway News
September 10, 2015 08:55 AM



Saulteau First Nation Chief Nathan Parenteau earned just over \$79,000 last year. Saulteau was the latest local First Nation to file its financial statements for 2015. Both Doig River and Halfway River have yet to do so. Photo By File

Two of seven First Nations in northeastern B.C. could see funding withheld from the federal government after failing to file their First Nations Financial Transparency Act documents by Sept. 1.

Doig River and Halfway River First Nations did not file their financial statements by the federally imposed deadline, according to the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website.

They are two of 35 First Nations in B.C. that have yet to file. As of Sept. 8, 165 First Nations across Canada had not filed their statements. There are 581 First Nations in total across Canada.

Earlier in August, Saulteau First Nation filed its financial transparency act documents, making it the fifth such local nation to do so, and, as of Sept. 4, the latest. Fort Nelson, Blueberry River, Prophet River, and West Moberly First Nations filed statements in July.

The documents show that Saulteau Chief Nathan Parenteau earned just over \$79,000 for 12 months as chief, with about \$8,500 of expenses. This was higher than the provincial average salary of \$61,000.

Saulteau First Nations took in about \$11 million in revenue over the 2015 fiscal year, which ended last March. The single largest source of revenue was from a category called "Other land use and miscellaneous contracts," which brought in about \$4.1 million to the band.

Saulteau spent less than it brought in with about \$9.8 million in expenses. The single largest expenditure category was under administration, which was about \$3 million.

Parenteau deferred comment on Saulteau's finances.

Salaries, revenues vary greatly

The financial documents showed a wide range of remuneration for First Nations across B.C.

Chief Michelle Edwards of Cayoose Creek Indian Band brought in just \$5,900. Gwaenuk Tribe Chief Charlie Williams was the highest paid chief for a band with a chief and councilors, earning a salary of \$211,090 last year. The band, which online records show has a registered population of 41, only reported about \$1.6 million in revenue, meaning William's paycheck was equivalent to more than 10 per cent of its annual revenue.

Williams disputed the pay figure with the Vancouver Sun, saying he doesn't make that much money through the band and noting he makes some money in forestry.

"I don't believe I have to explain to you what I do outside my band activities. It's not all band stuff," Williams reportedly told the newspaper.

Revenues amongst the bands also varied widely.

Kwaw-kwaw-Aplit First Nation reported the least amount of revenue at about \$318,000. Its 2015 total registered population was 44, according to the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website.

Squamish First Nation reported revenues of about \$94 million last year, the most amongst B.C. First Nations. Its 2015 population was about 4,100, making it the First Nation with the second highest population in the province.

There were also six First Nations whose chief's latest reported remuneration amounted to 10 per cent of the band's 2015 revenue. They included the Gwawaenuk Tribe, the Kwlakah, Lake Cowichan, Oregon Jack, Skuppah, and Aitchelitz First Nations.

Population for these bands in 2015 ranged from 20 to 119 registered people. Band revenues ranged from \$468,000 to \$1.6 million, and salaries ranged from \$24,000 to \$211,090.

On average, B.C. chief pay totaled about 1.9 per cent of band revenues.

The populations of these First Nations ranged greatly, as well. The Popkum First Nation had just 12 registered members as of 2015. Popkum has not reported finances for either 2014 or 2015. The largest First Nation was Cowichan First Nation, which has about 4,800 people.

- See more at: <http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/regional-news/two-northeastern-first-nations-could-face-funding-freeze-1.2054890#sthash.RVmxxDYI.dpuf>

Aboriginal Community Development

Rose Island: A final resting place in the hearts of Labrador's Inuit

By John Gaudi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 07, 2015 5:00 AM NT Last Updated: Sep 07, 2015 5:00 AM NT



Evie Mark, David Serkoak, and Akinisie Sivuarapik paid tribute to the remains of 113 Inuit reburied on Rose Island in the Torngat Mountains by throat singing and drum dancing. (John Gaudi/CBC)

A stone cairn holding the remains of more than a hundred Inuit individuals sits peacefully on Rose Island in the Torngat Mountains National Park, along the northern coast of Labrador.

This is their final resting place.

Akinisie Sivuarapik, a throat singer from Puvirnituk, Nunavik — the Inuit area of northern Quebec — says she doesn't feel alone in the Torngat Mountains landscape.

"You can feel the spirits from these mountains, and you can actually see faces on the mountains, like different facial expressions," she said. "So you feel the spirits here. You don't feel alone here."

This summer, Sivuarapik paid tribute to the mass burial site on Rose Island with Evie Mark, who lives in Montreal but is from Ivujivik on the Hudson Strait.

Like Sivuarapik, Mark felt emotional the first time she throat sang at the mass grave.

The spirits miss hearing throat singing and drum dancing, Mark said. That's why she and Sivuarapik dedicate songs to them.

"Today, I think that they celebrate when we come here. I don't see them sad or lonely," said Mark. "I think when we come here they get a chance to celebrate."



This mass burial site on Rose Island holds the remains of 113 Inuit individuals who were removed from Rose Island and nearby Upernavik Island between 1969 and 1971. Elders and summer students built the mass grave in 1995 so the remains could be returned home and reburied respectfully. (John Gaudi/CBC)

The story of what happened here goes back decades.

Parks Canada's Gary Baikie says the remains of 113 Inuit were removed from graves on Rose Island and nearby Upernavik Island between 1969 and 1971.

He says Dr. Jacob Edson Way removed and studied the bones for his doctoral thesis on paleontology.

They were stored at the University of Toronto, and later at Memorial University in St. John's.

'I think when we come here they get a chance to celebrate.' - *Evie Mark*

In 1995, a Labrador Inuit elders committee was set up to bring the remains back in a respectful way.

They were reburied on Rose Island, along with their worldly goods, such as pots and lamps.

"I'm very humbled to be able to tell the story of this place and tell the story of the people that were taken away from this area and brought back" said Baikie, who is the visitor experience manager for Torngat Mountains National Park.

"Now that they are home, they will be at rest here forever. They will not be disturbed again."

Archaeological sites on Rose Island span more than 5,000 years.

Baikie says it's the only island in the Arctic where so many people are buried.

There are just under 700 traditional Inuit graves on the island, and Baikie says it's not hard to see why Inuit laid their loved ones to rest here.



Parks Canada's Gary Baikie tells the story of how the remains of 113 Inuit were removed and subsequently returned to Rose Island. (Submitted by Pat Morrow)

He says the Torngat Mountains is a spiritual place for Inuit, not to mention the area was abundant with wildlife like whales, seals and walrus.

It's now been two decades since Memorial University and the provincial government sent the remains back to be reburied at Rose Island.

Nonetheless, it's still an emotional place.

"I even started crying while throat singing, " said Sivuarapik, who first visited the site last year. "You can feel the emotion here. It's very touching. It feels good to throat sing for them."

David Serkoak, who's originally from Arviat, Nunavut, and feels he's on his way to becoming an elder, paid his respects by drum dancing.

He says the graves should not have been disturbed in the first place.

"This mass grave here, it's always mixed emotions, not so much life before their death but after death and what happened to them," he said. "They shouldn't be in a mass grave. They should be in their original place."

Serkoak drum danced for his own mother on the day that she was buried.

He said that made him feel as good as if he had medicine.



Throat singers Akinisie Sivuarapik and Evie Mark dedicate songs at a mass grave on Rose Island. Mark said, "I think that they celebrate when we come here. I don't see them sad or lonely. I think when we come here they get to celebrate." (Submitted by Pat Morrow)

Meanwhile, Baikie says it's important to reflect on what's happened at Rose Island.

He also says thanks to the hard work of people like Serkoak, Mark and Sivuarapik, throat singing and drum dancing are still part of Inuit culture in Labrador.

"For me, I like to take at least 10 minutes and just absorb the whole presence and the whole feeling of this very powerful place."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/rose-island-torngat-mountains-1.3216484>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

First Nations man tracks down person he believes killed his mother

'I've dreamed of confronting this guy,' Gary Wassaykeesic says of his 39-year quest

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 07, 2015 7:00 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 08, 2015 10:38 AM ET



'I had built up all this energy for this one moment and it went quiet. Inside I could just feel quiet,' Gary Wassaykeesic says of the moment he confronted the man he believes killed his mother.

Gary Wassaykeesic's 39-year quest to find the man he believes killed his mother came to a surprising end in a hospital room last week in Sioux Lookout, Ont.

Sophie Wassaykeesic died in the small northern Ontario mining town of Central Patricia, now part of Pickle Lake, Ont., in 1976. The coroner determined her death was a "self-administered alcohol overdose." [But her son has never believed that.](#)

Back then, as a grieving 11-year-old, Wassaykeesic said he confronted the man everyone in town said killed Sophie.

"I remember going up to him, pointing a finger at him and saying, 'I'm going to come get you, I'm going to look for you,'" Wassaykeesic said. "I've always held to that promise."

Time spent in residential school, foster homes and reform schools meant Wassaykeesic lost track of the man, but he was never far from his mind.



Gary Wassaykeesic, seen here at a 2013 Idle No More blockade in Caledonia, Ont., says his activism was always fuelled by his sense of injustice over his mother's death. (Adam Carter/CBC)

Wassaykeesic became an activist, living in Toronto, often speaking out on missing and murdered indigenous women. But, life wasn't easy.

"This has led me to a whole lot of situations and places that I never wanted to be, the alcoholism, the drug addiction," Wassaykeesic said. "I still had all the anger, all the rage, relationships falling apart, can't hold a job, always thinking about this guy."

'I have the power now'

A few weeks ago, Wassaykeesic got word that the man he was looking for was in hospital in Sioux Lookout. Wassaykeesic began hitchhiking north, with vengeance on his mind.

"I've built up scenarios, I've fantasied, I've dreamed of confronting this guy," he said. "I was a kid when it happened, now he's the kid, lying in a hospital bed. I have the power now."

Wassaykeesic said he wasn't sure, until he went into the man's hospital room, how he'd use that power. Elders had warned him against violence.

"I looked at [the man] and it seemed like the bottom dropped out, the rage, the anger. Everything went quiet," Wassaykeesic said. "I had built up all this energy for this one moment and it went quiet. Inside I could just feel quiet."

Wassaykeesic said he spoke to the man in Ojibway, asking if he remembered him and then began listing off his brothers, talking about the impact their mother's death had on their lives.

'It's over, it's done.'

He said he thought he saw recognition and fear in the man's eyes, but there was no confession.

"I said, 'I was a kid, I told you I was going to come get you'," Wassaykeesic said. "I said, 'this is it, it's over, it's done.'"

He said he touched the man then and said "I could have had you". Then, Wassaykeesic sat with the man a while longer and finally left.

The meeting had a powerful effect on Wassaykeesic.

"The rush when I walked out, the high, nothing compares to what I was feeling when I came walking out," he said with a laugh. "I wanted to tell taxi drivers, I wanted to tell people walking by, that I walked out of that room. I could have had him, but I walked out."

Wassaykeesic said he still wants to see a new investigation into his mother's death. He hopes there will be a hearing, or a chance for him and his brothers to give victim impact statements in court. But the desire for justice is no longer overwhelming.

"I don't have to do this any more, I don't have to concentrate on this any more," Wassaykeesic said. "The closure that I've been looking for, I got that. I'm free to do what I want now."

"Even as I was walking out that door, I was thinking, 'now I can go on with my life,' he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-man-tracks-down-person-he-believes-killed-his-mother-1.3218043>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Inuktitut digital library aims to improve early education for Inuit

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's Katiqsugat database collects materials from Nunavik, Nunavut, Nunatsiavut, N.W.T.

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 07, 2015 7:00 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 07, 2015 7:00 AM CT



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada's national Inuit organization, says it hopes a new online library of early childhood education materials will help promote traditional teachings and the development of Inuit language skills. (CBC)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is aiming to connect Inuktitut parents and educators with early childhood education materials in their language with its new Katiqsugat: Inuit Early Learning Resources database.

The digital library provides free access to learning materials like games, songs, stories and research, gathered from every Inuit region in Canada.

"I know that a lot of people are desperate for that material," says ITK President Terry Audla.

"There's not a lot of material on there, but what we're hoping is that everyone across Inuit Nunangat will start depositing or putting in the material that they have there."

The materials are also meant to be culturally relevant, so that ideas and concepts are presented "in such a way that it introduces to the child the importance of language and culture."



The Katiqsugat database offers free access to stories, games, songs and program materials for early childhood educators and parents across the Inuit regions of Canada. (Vincent Desrosiers/CBC)

Audla says "at that age they're most receptive to that type of material."

ITK, Canada's national Inuit organization, has not developed any of the materials, but it has collected the items from Inuit educators across Canada.

"What we're doing is making it easier, so that whatever's been developed in say Nunatsiavut is easily and readily available to those in Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit."

'Resources are needed'

In Baker Lake, Christine Aylward says Inuktitut learning materials are hard to find and a digital library sounds like a good idea.

"To be honest with you, the only Inuit material we have here to do with children, is ... flashcards," said Aylward, the manager of Baker Lake Daycare. "We kind of make them ourself."

Aylward says the centre's 18 to 24 children use English materials 90 per cent of the time.

But she also says relying on online resources may pose a problem for small daycares and head start programs, since paper, ink and other printing supplies are very expensive.

"When we run out, it takes so long to get our supplies."

While Audla says the database of materials is meant to help children get a strong foundation in Inuktitut for their future education, more needs to be done to support early childhood education for all Inuit.

"Obviously more money and resources are needed," said Audla, "so that [educators] have the infrastructure that they sorely need to ensure that the best education is given to our children."

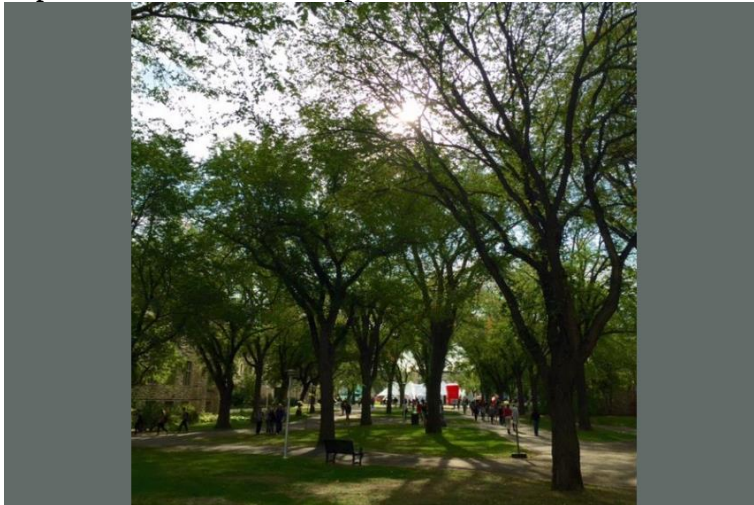
Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuktitut-digital-library-aims-to-improve-early-education-for-inuit-1.3217550>

Aboriginal and international students help boost enrolment at U of S

By

[CKOM News](#)

September 8, 2015 - 12:01pm



University of Saskatchewan on the first day of classes.

While overall enrolment remains steady at the University of Saskatchewan, the campus is slowly becoming a more diverse place.

As of the first day of classes, the number of aboriginal students enrolled in classes was sitting at 2,072. The 8.3 per cent increase over the previous year also marked the fourth consecutive increase for that demographic.

Patti McDougall, U of S vice-provost of teaching and learning, said she expects the number of self-declared aboriginal students to increase as the year goes on, with another information campaign set to begin later this month.

“To help support and better understand the needs of aboriginal students, each term we invite aboriginal students, who haven’t already, to self-declare their aboriginal ancestry,” McDougall said in a release.

She said having students declare their ancestry is key to maintaining and developing effective programs and services that support aboriginal students.

The number of international graduate and undergraduate students also rose this year with 2,238 enrolled.

McDougall said attracting and retaining international students is a priority for the university pointing to the International Student and Study Abroad Centre, which helps students new to Canada adjust to the city and university.

Overall, enrolment on campus is up slightly over last year sitting at 19,754, but is on par with the five year average.

The College of Agriculture and and Bioresources saw the biggest spike so far this year with enrolment increasing 11.5 per cent.

Direct Link: <http://ckom.com/article/216122/aboriginal-and-international-students-help-boost-enrolment-u-s>

Children of the Broken Treaty eye-opening read for Canadians

New book by Charlie Angus chronicles First Nation fight for right to on-reserve education

By Doug Cuthand, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 09, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Sep 09, 2015 6:00 AM ET



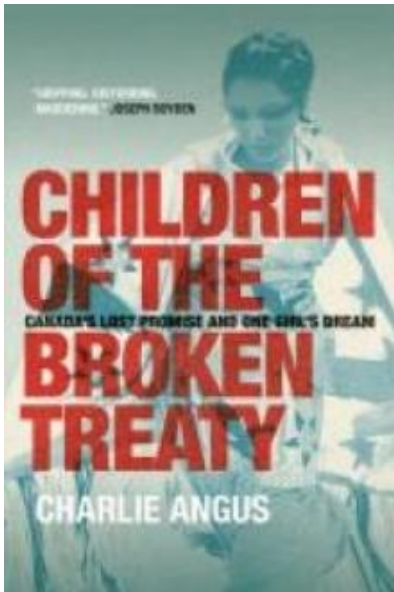
Shannen Koostachin, from Attawapiskat First Nation, was one of the young people who emerged as a leaders and spokesperson for the students of the James Bay area. Charlie Angus tells her story in his new book, *Children of the Broken Treaty*. (Suppled)

This week across Canada students will go back to school. Most will return to modern facilities with labs, gymnasiums, libraries with audio visual equipment and special needs teachers.

Most First Nations students on reserves will return to crowded, sub standard facilities that lack any so-called frills. Some will go to portable classrooms which are the legacy of the department of Aboriginal Affairs.

This is the sad reality for many First Nations' students. Years of under-funding and lapsing much needed resources has resulted in school infrastructure that would cause a revolution if it occurred in a major city.

But for First Nations, especially ones in remote locations, the federal government has practiced a policy of out-of-sight, out-of-mind when it comes to infrastructure and school construction.



NDP MP Charlie Angus has written a new book, *Children of the Broken Treaty*, about a young activist's fight for a school in Attawapiskat. (Octopus Books)

In his book, *Children of the Broken Treaty*, Charlie Angus chronicles the sorry state of affairs in the James Bay lowlands on the Ontario side. Angus is also the NDP member of parliament for the area.

At first I approached his book with a skeptical attitude. After all he is running for re-election.

But this isn't a typical political tome, ghost written to aggrandize the politician. Charlie Angus places himself as one of the observers and participants. As the local MP he spoke out in behalf of the people at Attawapiskat and other First Nations communities in his constituency. He was also friends with the local leaders and he shared their concerns.

The story is driven by the teenage students of the area schools and Attawapiskat First Nation in particular.

Attawapiskat and the other First Nations located in northern Ontario are signatories to Treaty No. 9. Like all the numbered treaties that were signed between the Crown and the First Nations across the prairies and northern Ontario and the North West Territories, it contains the clause that the government will provide a school on the reserve.

Repeated errors, incompetence

The story of the school at Attawapiskat is a story of repeated errors and incompetence. In 1980 when the new school was being built they had to install a 1,800 gallon fuel tank since all the fuel for the community had to be transported on ice roads during the winter months. In the course of hooking up the line to the teachers' units the line was poorly installed and the shifting muskeg caused the line to break. This resulted in a fuel spill that would eventually contaminate the school.

For years the conditions in the school were unbearable and dangerous. The children and teachers got sick and some had permanent headaches.

The community began to rebel and demand that a new school. Eventually the school was shut down and portable classrooms were installed.

Shannen's dream

Shannen Koostachin, from Attawapiskat, spent her early school years in portable classrooms. Until she moved to Timmons for High School she was never stepped inside a real school.

She was one of the young people who emerged as a leaders and spokesperson for the students of the James Bay area.

Shannen and the students began a letter writing campaign to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Chuck Strahl. They requested a meeting with the minister and instead of making the school's annual trip for graduates to visit southern Ontario and see Toronto and Niagara Falls the students opted to go to Ottawa and meet the minister.



Shannen Koostachin speaks at the National Day of Action on Parliament Hill in May 2008, a rally calling for better schools for First Nations children. (Courtesy of 8th Fire)

To their surprise Strahl agreed to meet them in his office. The group arrived with heightened expectations because the meeting was occurring on the National Day for Action for Indigenous People. A march was planned and activists from across the country had gathered. The feeling was that Strahl would make a positive announcement to counter the bad publicity coming from the march.

The students gathered in Strahl's office and prepared to make their presentation calling for a new school in their community. Strahl interrupted them and told them that the answer was no, the school wouldn't be built and it wasn't on the list of government priorities.

The students, elders and parents were stunned and heartbroken. They left the minister's office and participated in the march.

But they didn't give up. The students used social media to form alliances with other schools and support groups. The response was overwhelming and eventually the minister had to relent and build a new school.

Sadly Shannen Koostachin was killed in a traffic accident in 2010 while attending high school at North Bay. From then on the drive to get a new school became "Shannen's Dream."

Eye-opener for Canadians

Children of the Broken Treaty is the story of young people's struggle for a better life for themselves and their community.

The Harper tactic to double down and attack rather than negotiate comes off looking mean spirited and out of touch.

While the story may be an eye-opener for mainstream Canadians it confirms what most first Nations people know or have experienced firsthand.

This is a very important book to understand our struggle. Angus does a good job of setting out the details and behind the scenes manoeuvring that led to the final outcome. While their struggle is by no means over [this fall the students at Attawapiskat are attending a real school.](#)

Fixing broken treaties

The fight for schools is only one issue that must be addressed. Other issues such as poor housing, contaminated drinking water, and a high suicide rate continue to haunt the James Bay communities.

I think the answer lies a little further south in the "ring of fire" mining development.

Our people maintain that the treaties were agreements to share the land and its resources. If the Ontario government were to implement resource revenue sharing with the affected treaty nine communities and if affirmative action programs were demanded of the mining companies for training and employment, communities like Attawapiskat could deal with the infrastructure and lifestyle issues and become self sufficient.

All it takes is some political will.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/children-of-the-broken-treaty-eye-opening-read-for-canadians-1.3218232>

Province announces funding for 5 new aboriginal student programs at UNBC

Samantha WRIGHT ALLEN / Prince George Citizen
September 8, 2015 09:38 PM



Beverly Isaac Interim Assistant Director First Nation Centre at UNBC. Citizen photo by Brent Braaten Sept 8 2015 - Brent Braaten, Photographer

The University of Northern B.C. is launching five new programs for its aboriginal students with the help of provincial funding.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, through its annual Aboriginal Service Plan program, announced Tuesday \$200,000 in funding for UNBC out of a total \$3.7 million handed to post-secondary institutions.

It will go towards academic coaches, a community connections coordinator, an alumni speaker series, an elders in residence program and a seven-day transition course to show high school students university life.

Those services would have been a huge help to Bev Isaac when she moved from Stelat'en First Nation near Fraser Lake for university some 10 years ago.

Even then she said the First Nation Centre was essential to her success as a student.

"Just having that support to be able to come regenerate and go back out there and get my education, it was a huge help having those supports," said Isaac, the centre's interim assistant director.

"We are so grateful to the funding because we're able to bring in these kind of programs that help students not only transition to UNBC but it helps them stay connected to their culture to their communities. It touches them personally, each program and that's what we intend to do."

When Isaac took up the role in December last year, they tried to revitalize the services by talking to students, faculty and staff about what was missing, and what was needed.

"One of the issues was having elders present," she said, adding each month a new elder will be brought in for a week stay "so that students can connect with their communities, their cultures (and) share."

UNBC residences has donated a room for the program. The first elder hasn't yet been selected but will likely be from Lheidli T'enneh out of respect for the territory where the university stands.

The community connections coordinator will work on relationships between the university and the First Nation communities in the region and the academic coaches will work at the regional campuses to help new university students with the transition.

One of the programs is targeting high school students launched last spring and was so successful it had a waitlist. The goal of the seven-day "Spring into Transitions" experiential approach to learning is to show some 30 Aboriginal students that university is attainable, Isaac said.

"I think a lot of students, especially coming from northern communities, cannot picture themselves in institutes like this," said Isaac, who herself never imagined post-secondary was possible and was the first in her family to pursue higher education.

"It's a lot for students if they're the first in their families," she said. "I think if we take away that stigma of it being too far away or too hard and we show them that it is really possible then I think we're opening a lot more eyes."

In School District 57, last year's graduation rate for aboriginal learners sat at 48.8 per cent compared to 81 per cent of non-aboriginal students.

"It's not so far off to be able to come here and go to school we have so much supports and resources within the university that anybody can come here and get an education," she said.

The funding covers a variety of costs, including professors, transportation for students and elders, travel and food, honorariums and more. At this point, they're still considered pilot projects, but Isaac hopes that will change.

"(The programs) are only possible because of the Aboriginal Service Plan funding from the government. If they're as successful as we hope they're going to be, then they become solidly funded by UNBC."

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/province-announces-funding-for-5-new-aboriginal-student-programs-at-unbc-1.2053388#sthash.hPx5StTf.dpuf>

BC appoints senior advisor for aboriginal child welfare

by [Martin MacMahon](#) and [Jill Drews](#)

Posted Sep 9, 2015 1:56 pm PDT

Last Updated Sep 9, 2015 at 1:57 pm PDT



One in seven First Nations children in British Columbia spend time in government care

Grand Chief Edward John has a difficult job ahead: Child advocate

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – The province’s move to appoint a senior advisor on aboriginal child welfare is meant to improve the situation for the thousands of First Nations children in government care and attempting to reduce the numbers of kids who end up there.

The man chosen for the role is [Grand Chief Edward John](#), a lawyer former minister of children and family development.

Minister of Aboriginal Relations, [John Rustad](#) hopes John will recommend ways to build better support for First Nations families.

“We need to be doing more in terms of making sure that First Nations have their families whole at home, how we can work together with First Nations to be able to achieve better results and we feel that the experience that Ed John brings to that role will be very beneficial for us as a province,” says John.

[Grand Chief Stewart Phillip](#) says he has faith in John given his experience but hopes the province does more to address this issue.

“We welcome Grand Chief Ed John’s appointment, but we need a full measure of commitment,” says Phillip. “Half measures are unacceptable, so we’re hoping it leads to something more substantive.

Phillip says First Nations would like to see the provincial government convene a province-wide meeting to discuss the “appalling conditions of children and families” in aboriginal communities.

One in seven First Nations children in British Columbia spend time in government care, with approximately half of all kids in government care being of aboriginal descent.

BC's Children and Youth advocate wonders if the move was made to make real change or to relieve the political pressure for action.

[Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond](#) says her recent report on problems facing aboriginal children in care has already identified where change is needed.

“That discussion, while it needs to be facilitated in the corridors of power in the backrooms of government, we need to see real change on the ground for these kids in how they're supported served.”

She says Grand Chief Edward John has a difficult job ahead getting the provincial government to spend more to fix these problems.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/09/09/province-appoints-senior-advisor-for-aboriginal-child-welfare/>

Grand chief to help find homes for aboriginal children in care

[Lindsay Kines](#) / Times Colonist
September 9, 2015 10:40 PM



Ed John is to submit monthly reports, and one final report when his term ends March 31, 2016.
Photograph By Kim Stallknecht

Grand Chief Edward John, a former NDP cabinet minister, will work with the Liberal government over the next six months to help more aboriginal children in care find permanent homes.

John, who served briefly as children's minister under premier Ujjal Dosanjh, was on Wednesday named a senior adviser on aboriginal child-welfare issues.

The government said John will assist in developing “stronger permanency plans” to increase adoptions, guardianship or other options to give children permanent homes.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development increased the number of adoptions by 38 to 265 in 2014-15, but still fell short of its stated goal of 300.

John will work with Children’s Minister Stephanie Cadieux and her deputy to engage aboriginal leaders in talks about reducing the number of children in care, the government said. He also may work on projects dealing with early childhood development.

“There’s an inordinate number of aboriginal children in care,” John said in an interview. “How to address it and how to reduce the numbers of children in care — that’s where I come in.”

John said adoption is just one of the issues he will examine. He noted that poverty is a key factor behind aboriginal children ending up in costly foster care.

If that money could be redirected to supporting families, it could go a long way to reversing the trend, he said.

He also noted that the federal government provides prevention supports to families in other provinces, and he’ll be pressing to extend that program into B.C.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, B.C.’s independent child watchdog, said the Ministry of Children and Family Development desperately needs leadership on aboriginal issues.

“They’ve shown that they’re woefully inadequate to understand these issues at the senior executive level or to lead on these issues,” she said. “So the admission today by the premier and the minister that they need to bring Grand Chief John in, I think really confirms what I’ve pointing out for some time, which is that they are just not equipped to address these issues and the issues have mounted.”

Turpel-Lafond expressed hope that John will be able to highlight the erosion in the level of service provided to aboriginal children and their families.

“Many of those programs have disappeared and the numbers of children and families served has declined,” she said. “So aboriginal children and families today continue to be without the support that they need for the magnitude of issues that they face.”

The number of aboriginal children in care has remained relatively stable at about 4,400. But the proportion of aboriginal children in the system has risen as the ministry has been more successful at reducing the number of non-aboriginal children in care.

The government now says that 55 per cent of children living out of their parental home in B.C. are aboriginal. Aboriginal children account for eight per cent of the total child population in the province.

Cadieux issued a statement Wednesday calling John a “natural fit” to continue the ministry’s work finding permanent homes for children.

“We’ve seen improvements in this area,” she said. “Permanency rates and adoptions are going up even as the number of aboriginal kids coming into care is beginning to decline. ... However, things just aren’t moving fast enough. We need to do better at keeping pace with trends in the non-aboriginal population.”

She noted that John has been working with B.C.’s First Nations communities for years, and “has the relationships, the knowledge and the respect within those communities to inspire action and meaningful change.”

John will submit monthly progress reports to Cadieux until his contract expires March 31, 2016.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/grand-chief-to-help-find-homes-for-aboriginal-children-in-care-1.2054651#sthash.BmLiawP5.dpuf>

White Bear Education Complex marks new school year with traditional flag-raising ceremony

Lynne Bell / Carlyle Observer
September 10, 2015 01:27 AM



White Bear Education Complex marked the new school year with the school's traditional flag-raising ceremony on Thurs, Sept. 3. As School Elder Josh Kakakeway (far left) looks on, (l-r) teacher Kevin Kermack and students Tommy Cappel and Tristan Littlechief raise the White Bear First Nations flag, the Treaty Four flag and the White Bear Education Complex school flag, while student Andrew Kakakeway carries the Eagle Staff. Photo: Lynne Bell

White Bear Education Complex marked the return to the 2015-2016 school year with the school's traditional flag-raising ceremony, Thursday, Sept. 3.

Principal Sheri McArthur-Cappo says, "Every year, when we start the school year, we raise three flags. One is the White Bear First Nations flag, one is the Treaty Four flag and one is our White Bear Education Complex school flag. We raise them to start the school year in a good way and to commit to a safe, healthy and caring school year amongst all of us at White Bear."

Before the ceremony began, School Elder Josh Kakakeway used a mixture of sage, cedar, sweetgrass and tobacco in a purification ceremony before he said a prayer in Cree, encouraging the staff and students to "Either look up to the sky or bow your heads and pray in whatever language you like."

Kakakeway told non-Cree speakers: "I asked the Creator to watch over all of us here to have a prosperous year and I asked others who have worked here before to watch over us in a good way."

Drummers from White Bear-T.J., Brent and J.R. Played the Flag Song and the Victory Song. During the Victory Song, Kakakeway told staff and students, "We came come through a lot of trials. I encourage you-especially the young ones-to dance to the Victory Song."

This year's flag-raisers were teacher Kevin Kermack and students Tommy Cappo and Tristan Littlechief.

"I was nervous, but it is an honour," said Littlechief of her flag-raising duties.

Student Andrew Kakakeway carried the Eagle Staff throughout the ceremony. Its four feathers represent the Assiniboine, Cree, Saulteaux and Sioux nations, all of which make up White Bear First Nations.

This year there are 150 students from pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 enrolled at WBEC, with one new teacher-Cheryl Peterson-joining the staff.

Peterson, who is the grade nine home room teacher, says returning to White Bear is a homecoming for her.

"I've been a teacher for 15 years," she says. "I came here from Red Earth, Saskatchewan, but I've taught in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan."

Although Peterson's teaching career has taken her throughout the prairie provinces and in both urban and rural settings (including a stint in Calgary), she says, "Returning to White Bear is awesome. I'm so happy to be back in my home community and I'm really looking forward to this year."

The ceremony ended with staff and students shaking hands with the flag-raisers, Eagle Staff carrier, drummers and singers, elders and their school principal.

“We'd like to welcome everyone back to our school-students and staff,” says McArthur-Cappo. “We're looking forward to a good year at our school.”

- See more at: <http://www.carlyleobserver.com/news/local-news/white-bear-education-complex-marks-new-school-year-with-traditional-flag-raising-ceremony-1.2053577#sthash.7e9M61Cn.dpuf>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

First 'Strength of Our Women' awards gala to honour aboriginal women to be held in Saskatoon

By

[Kelly Malone](#)

September 10, 2015 - 3:17pm Updated: September 11, 2015 - 5:49am



FSIN interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan speaks to the crowd at the Saskatoon missing and murdered indigenous women roundtable discussion.

The achievements of Saskatchewan's aboriginal women will be front and centre at TCU Place Thursday night for the first annual “Strength of Our Women” awards gala and dinner.

The gala is being put on by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and the Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission (SFNWC) to recognize the contributions and achievements of First Nations women and girls.

“Our First Nations women are extraordinary and have to be seen in that light. Our women are strong, successful and resilient and we need society to see them as extraordinary,” FSIN Interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan said in a media release.

Women from across the province have been nominated in 12 categories including arts, business, culture, education, and sports.

SFNWC will also use the opportunity to remind the community that First nations women are nearly three times more likely than non-First Nations women to report being a victim of a violent crime and the high rates of missing and murdered indigenous women in Saskatchewan.

For information or tickets visit the [FSIN website](#).

Direct Link: <http://ckom.com/article/216450/first-strength-our-women-awards-gala-honour-aboriginal-women-be-held-saskatoon>

Aboriginal Politics

Canada’s First Nations must vote, to save their sovereignty

[Julian Brave NoiseCat](#)

Native people have been trampled over by Canadian politics, but the best way to protect our rights is to use our power at the ballot box in the upcoming election



First Nations protestors form a blockade near Marysville, Ontario, last year as part of a day of action to call attention to missing and murdered indigenous and aboriginal women. Photograph: Fred Thornhill/Reuters

Monday 7 September 2015 17.34 BST Last modified on Tuesday 8 September 2015 11.18 BST

[National elections are fast approaching in Canada](#), and the nation’s poorest and most marginalised communities – First Nations – will probably deliver the lowest voter turnout

of any demographic in the country. Just 44% of eligible voters on Indian reserves exercised their democratic right in the 2011 federal election, compared with 61% of Canadians in the general population. Voter ID laws created by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's incumbent Conservative party – which require voters to provide identification that includes their address – will make it even more difficult for native people to vote this time around. Indian status cards (the primary form of identification for many native people) do not include addresses, and Indian reserves often do not demarcate street and house numbers anyway.

To add to the problem, Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), admitted last week that he has [never voted in a federal election](#).

Some native leaders, activists and intellectuals don't see low native voter turnout in national elections as a problem. In fact they say that First Nations – whose sovereign rights are trampled over by political parties of all stripes – must take a stand against the ongoing and unjust colonisation of their homelands by refusing to vote in national elections. Their position is principled: why should First Nations, whose governments, laws and communities pre-date settlement and colonisation, vote for a Canadian government built on lands stolen from them?

But, in fact, it is just the opposite. First Nations must vote in federal elections to ensure their viability and even their very survival as sovereign nations. This is not so much a capitulation as it is a pragmatic political stand to challenge what has become a grim status quo.

Over the last 11 years, the Conservative government has waged a war of attrition against First Nations. Its policies include opening up indigenous territories to natural resources exploitation, slashing and withholding funding to essential social services such as [education](#), housing and healthcare to the tune of \$60m in cuts over the last three years and \$1bn in withheld funds over the last five, and forcing First Nations to adhere to new financial transparency laws that portray the widespread impoverishment of aboriginal people as the result of the actions of a few irresponsible leaders, rather than the inevitable consequence of an unjust system.

Conservative policies, which deprive First Nations of essential social services and permanently pollute indigenous territories, are making our communities unliveable. [Last week Canada officially entered a recession](#), and with First Nations teetering on the brink of elimination, there is a strong risk of us facing full-blown austerity policies if the Conservative prime minister continues in post after October.

But as we teeter on this precipice, we also have political strength, and must use it.

This is not so much a capitulation as it is a pragmatic political stand to challenge what has become a grim status quo

The policies of the Conservative government provoked the [Idle No More movement](#) – perhaps the most significant political mobilisation of First Nations since the [Red Power movement of the 1960s and 70s](#). Idle No More began with First Nations' opposition to the Harper government's omnibus Bill C-45, which violated indigenous rights and weakened environmental protections to benefit natural resource corporations. The movement led to many protests and blockades across the country that have successfully impeded some mines, oil pipelines and other unwanted extractive industries. Its rise reflects the creation of Red Power, which grew out of indigenous solidarity against Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal party's now infamous 1969 white paper, which proposed the elimination of Indian rights and reserves in Canada. Opposition to the white paper and Red Power led to the creation of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and the National Indian Brotherhood, which is now the [Assembly of First Nations](#). Now, Idle No More and indigenous opposition to Conservative policies must lead to a peaceful revolution at the ballot box, and according to the AFN, First Nations might just be able to make the difference between Harper's Conservatives continuing in power, and the election of a minority government led by the leftwing New Democratic party (NDP) or the centrist Liberals.

The Liberals have made a strong case for the native vote by putting up two aboriginal candidates and pledging \$2.6bn for First Nations education. The Liberal leader, Justin Trudeau, has made many promises to distance himself from the legacy of his father, the late Pierre Trudeau, and his 1969 white paper. But if they are elected as the minority government, the Liberals' centrist position does not bode well for First Nations, who need a coalition that will not compromise with Harper.

In order to secure the legacy of Idle No More, First Nations voters must advocate for the election of the NDP, the historical favourite on Indian reserves, where the party received 43% of the vote in 2011 – a full 12 points higher than among the general population. The NDP, led by Thomas Mulcair, has promised to uphold indigenous treaty rights and inherent rights, to call a national inquiry into [missing and murdered indigenous women](#), and invest in essential funding for First Nations education and infrastructure – a move passionately advocated by NDP member of parliament Charlie Angus in his recent book, [Children of the Broken Treaty](#), released while on the campaign trail.

Voting in these elections will undoubtedly require a political compromise for First Nations. The harsh realities of poverty and widespread unemployment on Indian reserves mean that the broader social services and welfare state promised by the leftwing NDP are essential for us to survive – but even the NDP will not easily support indigenous sovereignty, jurisdiction or land claims, making the courts, along with direct action, the dominant political strategies on these issues. The election of the NDP certainly will not deliver justice on stolen land – indeed, recession spells more hard times ahead for Canada's First Peoples.

But by voting, First Nations can return their communities from the precipice. They can strengthen indigenous sovereignty and move [Canada](#) in the right direction by giving voice to the country's poorest and most marginalised people.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/07/canada-first-nations-vote-native-canadian-politics-election>

First Nations face real-life barriers to voting in next federal election

Poverty, lack of identification among hurdles faced by indigenous people when it comes to voting

By Tim Fontaine, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2015 7:35 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 05, 2015 1:48 PM ET



Aboriginal woman casts ballot in The Pas, Manitoba. (Chris Glover/CBC)

When the head of the Assembly of First Nations recently laid out his organization's priorities in the upcoming federal election, he re-issued a plea for Indigenous Peoples to head to the polls.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde [also made an admission](#): he hadn't voted in the last federal election and wasn't sure whether he would vote in this one. Bellegarde reasoned he needed to stay non-partisan as national chief — but also spoke of personal ideologies.

Often, however, there are very practical reasons why so many indigenous people don't vote.

Getting to the polls

"The biggest one is transportation," says Sylvia Boudreau, social worker and organizer of Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote, a non-partisan group that advocates for indigenous voters.

Getting to the polling station could mean walking, driving a vehicle, arranging a ride or if

available, using public transit.

"If you have a single mother that maybe has children in tow, that becomes a barrier for her," said Boudreau.

According to the AFN, some remote or fly-in First Nations might not even have a polling station in the community.

"Jurisdiction is always an issue when having a ballot box on reserve, but there's an issue of accessibility," Bellegarde said.

The right I.D.

In 2015, new voter eligibility rules are in place that could make it more difficult to cast ballots, according to the Assembly of First Nations.

Under the new law, voters can use a driver's license or any other government issued identification that has a photo and address. That excludes Indian Status cards, which only have a photo.

If you don't have ID with photo and address, you must have two pieces of ID, one of which must include the voter's address.

Bellegarde calls that voter suppression since First Nations in rural or remote areas might not have the necessary documentation to vote.

In recent weeks, Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote has been organizing voter identification clinics.

"People have a hard time navigating the bureaucracies to be able to get the things they need," said organizer Lisa Forbes. "Some people, if they live on low income, don't have the money or the resources to do that."



Facebook photo makes fun of new voter identification requirements, which can prove tricky on reserves where houses often don't have traditional street addresses. (Facebook)

Many also point to voter ID problems on reserves, where houses often don't have traditional street addresses and where overcrowding or lack of housing means some people are unable to have a fixed address .

Easing challenges

To ease those challenges, Elections Canada has announced some changes.

The Manitoba Métis Federation recently found out the citizenship cards they issue will be accepted as identification during the 2015 federal election. There are 52,000 eligible Métis voters in Manitoba with citizenship cards.

First Nation governments, homeless shelters and soup kitchens are now able to issue letters, which can serve as one of the two required pieces of identification. Inuit people can also use cards issued by local Inuit authorities as one of two IDs.



Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde calls the identification requirements "another hurdle" that keeps people from voting. (Justin Tang/The Canadian Press)

But the national chief calls the identification requirements another hurdle and said in previous elections, chiefs only needed to be at the voting location on election day and personally vouch for the identification of community members.

Now, the national chief says local leaders can only do that once — and only if the voter has secondary identification.

Still, the Assembly of First Nations is encouraging chiefs to partner up with Elections Canada, which has given \$475,000 to the AFN to help inform their members about their right to vote and explain how to do it.

Knowing your right to vote

When a leader from the Tseshaht First Nation in B.C. recently contacted Elections Canada in Port Alberni, however, he claims the office wasn't much help.

Chief Councillor Hugh Braker said he requested posters or pamphlets he could distribute to his people, but he was told he would need to come to office and write down the information himself.

"The Elections Canada office is useless and actually an obstacle to registering," Braker wrote on Facebook.

Since Baker's message was posted on Sept. 2, he claims an official from Elections Canada called him to apologize and offered to mail a package of educational materials to the First Nation.

Still too many hurdles

Jason Tuesday said all of these barriers take a toll on indigenous people. The Anishinaabe musician, who lives in Winnipeg and works in the film industry, is going to vote for the first time in the upcoming federal election.

For a lot of people like me, voting is a luxury. - *Jason Tuesday, on the cost of leaving an hourly-wage job to vote*

Until recently, he said he had no fixed address and didn't even know which riding he was in. Tuesday also doesn't believe many of his fellow indigenous people will join with him in voting.

"A lot of people who at times can live desperate lives are not engaged at all," he said.

Tuesday said even if you can ask for time off work to go and vote, many people who work for an hourly wage can't afford to do that.

"For a lot of people like me, voting is a luxury," said Tuesday.

The country heads to the polls on Oct. 19, 2015.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-face-real-life-barriers-to-voting-in-next-federal-election-1.3215746>

First Nations voters have chance to swing election results

Cheryl Maloney urging all Canadians to get out an vote in the upcoming federal election

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 07, 2015 8:55 AM AT Last Updated: Sep 07, 2015 8:55 AM AT



Cheryl Maloney, president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's association, is leading an initiative here in Nova Scotia that she calls Mi'kma'ki Rock the Vote. (CBC)

A woman involved in First Nations politics in Nova Scotia is leading a new campaign to encourage more Mi'kmaq people to vote in the federal election.

Voter turnout in the First Nations population was about 44 per cent in the last election, much lower than in the population as a whole.

Fifty-one ridings across Canada have been identified by the Assembly of First Nations as potential swing ridings where, according to AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde, [the outcome could be determined by the turnout of aboriginal voters](#). Or, more importantly, the turnout could determine whether a minority or majority government is elected.

Cheryl Maloney, president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's association, is leading an initiative here in Nova Scotia that she calls Mi'kma'ki Rock the Vote.

"There's been — over the last 10 years but particularly in the last term — the Harper government has created a lot of legislation that really impacts aboriginal rights and our day to day living," Maloney told CBC's Information morning.

"It really launched a movement in this country that made First Nations aware of how much the impact of this legislation has on us and how little a voice we First Nations — but also we as Canadians — have with this current government. It's really a movement to get all Canadians participating."

'We can have an impact'

Native leaders across the country are trying to mobilize voters, in the hopes they can make a difference.

Maloney said in local aboriginal elections, many First Nations have turnouts of 90 per cent.

"So if we can convince those people that participate in their local elections to come out to the federal and provincial elections, then we can have an impact," said Maloney.

Maloney said in a close election such as this one, as well as in any democracy, voting is extremely important. She stresses it's important for all Canadians to cast their vote. Maloney said her group wants people to, first, register to vote — and then make sure they vote.

"All the lakes and rivers in this country are no longer protected and if that isn't enough reason, you there's freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, Bill C-51— the list is endless," she said.

The federal election takes place Oct. 19.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/first-nations-voters-have-chance-to-swing-election-results-1.3217916>

National Post View: Getting out the aboriginal vote

[National Post View](#) | September 5, 2015 | Last Updated: Sep 5 6:06 AM ET



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

According to Elections Canada data, aboriginal Canadians turn out to vote at rates that are 20 per cent below the national average. In some provinces — Alberta, Quebec and Newfoundland among them — the rate is closer to 30 per cent.

Hardly surprising, then, to find the Assembly of First Nations leading a major campaign to increase aboriginal voter turnout. As AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde recently pointed out, there are at least 51 federal ridings where aboriginal voters could substantially affect the outcome. Given how close the election is shaping up to be, they might even end up deciding who holds power.

As aboriginal Canadians' share of the population continues to expand, moreover, this influence can only grow. But to realize that potential, they need to get out to vote.

So it is disheartening to see hard-line aboriginal ideologues trying to undermine the AFN's good work. Consider, for example, the argument advanced by activist Russ Diabo in the online publication *Ricochet*, in which he described voting in national elections as an act of self "termination." Never mind who that vote might be cast for — the mere act of voting, he maintained, itself constituted submission to assimilation.

There could hardly be a 'solution' better calculated to further marginalize aboriginal Canadians and their concerns than withdrawing from the political process

To be fair, there is context for this. Much of Diabo's argument is rooted in disaffection and disillusionment with a political process that has often ignored or underplayed aboriginal issues. Indeed, it was only 55 years ago that aboriginal people were granted the right to vote in this country. But there could hardly be a "solution" better calculated to further marginalize aboriginal Canadians and their concerns than withdrawing from the political process, abandoning their hard-won right to vote just as they are gaining some electoral leverage.

Diabo also argues that voting undermines aboriginal people's "pre-existing" sovereignty and legitimizes the rule of "settlers." Of course, there are many meanings to "sovereignty." If native sovereignty means abolishing the Indian Act, establishing local

taxation and democratic accountability on reserves, and securing more control over land and mineral rights, then it's a useful basis for discussion.

If, on the other hand, it embraces a separatist fantasy in which every aboriginal band declares itself independent, patrols its own borders and restricts freedom of movement on its territory — all while continuing to draw on the federal treasury — that is simply not going to happen.

There is a better path to power — real power — for aboriginal Canadians. That is through the ballot box

Yet that is increasingly where the more radical native leaders are headed. Witness the \$20 toll road that the Stoney Nakoda reserve in Alberta recently tried to implement when a fatal traffic accident sent motorists veering onto their reserve. This is a recipe only for lawlessness and confrontation, to no one's benefit.

There is a better path to power — real power — for aboriginal Canadians. That is through the ballot box, in concert with their fellow Canadians. When aboriginal Canadians vote in large enough numbers, the parties will have to listen to them — not out of the goodness of their hearts, but because their support is critical to achieving power.

There has never been a better time to make their presence felt, and their choices known.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/national-post-view-getting-out-the-aboriginal-vote>

Can a new leader save Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami after drastic federal cuts?

'Just the ebb and flow of federal funding got to the point where we had to let good people go'

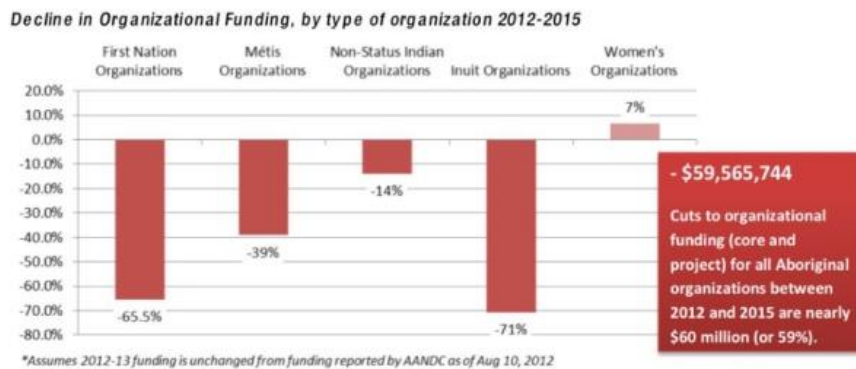
By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 09, 2015 7:30 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 09, 2015 8:47 AM CT



'For the past 10 years or so Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has been losing close to half of their funding,' says Terry Audla, the incumbent in the ITK presidential race. 'Just the ebb and flow of federal funding got to the point where we had to let good people go.' (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Canada's national Inuit organization is about to elect its next president, but the future of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami may depend on more than its leader.

In the past three years the federal government has cut over \$60 million in core funding to aboriginal organizations across the country. Figures compiled by the Assembly of First Nations show Inuit groups have been hit the hardest by the cuts.



This chart, compiled by the Assembly of First Nations, shows that Inuit organizations have been hit hardest by federal funding cuts, with federal contributions down 71 per cent between 2012 to 2015. (Assembly of First Nations)

"For the past 10 years or so Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has been losing close to half of their funding," says Terry Audla, the incumbent in the ITK presidential race, "Just the ebb and flow of federal funding got to the point where we had to let good people go."

Since 2009, ITK's federal contributions were slashed by \$2.5 million dollars. The Assembly of First Nations has been tracking these cuts.

"In order to have any good policy or good legislation, First Nations people need to be involved and we need to have the capacity to make sure that anything that's developed by government does not impact on inherent rights or aboriginal rights in a negative way," says National Chief Perry Bellegarde.



'All of these ways we've seen in the last five to 10 years of the federal government trying to do whatever it can to reduce the funding that Aboriginal people and especially the Inuit get,' says Natan Obed one of the three candidates for president at ITK. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

"When you don't have the resources to do that adequately, you're going to have a flawed process and a flawed policy, a flawed program and a flawed piece of legislation," adds Bellegarde.

In September 2012, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development announced cuts to core and operational capacity funding for aboriginal organizations and tribal councils across the Canada.

Bellegarde says the cuts directly impact the ability of aboriginal groups to play a meaningful role in policy development.

"The capacity is affected, the capacity to speak up and make informed dialogue, informed analysis, proper review," says Bellegarde who explains that staff are stretched too thinly and the resources are not there to assemble tribal councils together.



James Arreak, the CEO at Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. says they do not receive core federal funding and that the \$250 million paid to them was part of a settlement in a lawsuit over training for Inuit to enter civil service. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Natan Obed agrees, He is one of the three candidates for president at ITK. Obed says the cuts have meant a lack of direct Inuit involvement in program development.

"All of these ways we've seen in the last five to 10 years of the federal government trying to do whatever it can to reduce the funding that aboriginal people and especially, the Inuit, get," says Obed.

Nunavut's Conservative candidate says the Harper government has made many investments to Inuit groups.

"The Inuit organization is Nunavut Tunngavik. We just put \$258 million back into the pockets of the organization that's responsible for the Inuit of Nunavut," says Leona Aglukkaq, Nunavut's Conservative candidate.

But Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., one of four Inuit bodies in Canada created out of modern land claims, does not receive core federal funding. The [\\$250 million paid to them](#) was part of a settlement in a billion-dollar lawsuit over implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

"That was damages as a result of government obligations being ignored by both levels of government," says James Arreak, the CEO at Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Three candidates are running for ITK president. Jerry Komaksiutiksak did not answer requests for comment. On September 17, thirteen delegates will cast their votes for ITK president in Cambridge Bay.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/can-a-new-leader-save-inuit-tapiriit-kanatami-after-drastic-federal-cuts-1.3220497>

Urged by First Nations constituents, national chief Perry Bellegarde plans to vote

“The message to me is consistent and clear — it is vital that First Nations voices be heard in every way possible, including through the ballot box.”



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde says he'll be voting, but is so far undecided as to which party he'll support.

By: [Donovan Vincent](#) News reporter, Published on Wed Sep 09 2015

Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde says he plans to vote in the upcoming federal election after all.

In an interview with the [Star last week](#), Bellegarde, who late last year was elected the head of the national lobby group representing 634 First Nations communities in Canada, indicated he was undecided about whether he would vote in the Oct. 19 federal election. He also said he hadn't voted in the past.

"I just haven't done it. It's a real personal thing, because I've been in First Nations leadership positions for most of my life. And I was respecting what the older people told me: because we have a treaty relationship with the Crown.

"What they told me was, no matter who gets in, the Crown is supposed to live by and abide by the relationship and implement the treaty" he said last week explaining why he hasn't voted in the past.

But after giving that interview he travelled to his home province of Saskatchewan where he spoke to First Nations community members. Young and old, they urged him to exercise his franchise.

He also listened to [First Nations voices from across Canada](#).

"The message to me is consistent and clear — it is vital that First Nations voices be heard in every way possible, including through the ballot box," Bellegarde said in a statement Wednesday. He added that he was told "you need to be an example. You need to vote."

In an interview Wednesday from Ottawa, Bellegarde said he hasn't yet decided which party he'll support. He's still listening to what all [federal parties have to say](#) about a six-point plan the Assembly of First Nations has put forward, which keys on issues important to that community, including water, education, and stemming violence.

He added that the assembly believes First Nations voters could have [an impact in as many as 51 ridings](#), including ridings in northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/09/09/urged-by-first-nations-constituents-national-chief-perry-bellegarde-plans-to-vote.html>

Saskatoon panel set to debate First Nations vote

Debate to focus on the benefits of voting or not

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 09, 2015 11:02 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 09, 2015 11:02 AM CT



A panel discussion will be held tonight exploring the question of whether indigenous people should vote. (Keith Ivey, Flickr cc)

To vote or not to vote, seems like a simple question to answer.

But for First Nations it is a more complicated issue.

"There is only my world." - *Colby Tootoosis*

Tonight, a panel discussion called Indigenous Sovereignty: To Vote or Not to Vote will be held to explore the pros and cons of casting a ballot.

One of the participants is Colby Tootoosis.

"I'm more looking forward to December when Star Wars comes out, then the results of the election in October," he told Saskatoon Morning host Leisha Grebinski.

Tootoosis said that he won't be voting because the end result will be the same, regardless of which party wins the federal election.

A new political awareness

On the other side of the discussion you'll find John Lagimodiere, a Metis consultant and the publisher of the Eagle Feather News. Lagimodiere believes that indigenous people are now more politically active, thanks in parts to movement like Idle No More.

"That general awareness that the impact is there really energized the young people and they are motivated and they are wired in."

"They have the opportunity to walk in both worlds," he said. "If you can impact government policy you can impact issues back home."

For Colby, those two worlds do not exist.

"There is only my world, and that's the indigenous perspective and my relationship to the land as an original inhabitant."

His message tonight will be for indigenous people to ignore the federal vote and concentrate instead on strengthening traditional forms of governance.

The panel discussion will begin this evening at 7 p.m. CST at Station 20 West in Saskatoon.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-panel-set-to-debate-first-nations-vote-1.3220996>

First Nations leaders held hostage by Conservatives

Some First Nations leaders are reluctant to criticize Stephen Harper because their communities are largely reliant on federal financial largesse.



Canadians — and many First Nations citizens — were bewildered when National Chief Perry Bellegarde announced that he would not do what he was asking his constituents to consider doing — vote, writes Maurice Switzer. A week later Bellegarde reversed his decision.

By: Maurice Switzer Published on Thu Sep 10 2015

The good news for First Nations leaders anxious to see the Harper Conservatives swept out of office Oct. 19 is that the largest likely bloc of decided eligible voters in Canada resides within their million citizens-band members.

The bad news is that the Indigenous turnout in the last federal election was almost 20 per cent lower than that among Canadians at large.

First Nations leaders are caught between a rock and Stephen Harper as they agonize over how best to motivate their constituents to help turf out a government that has been openly hostile to their concerns.

Many of the country's 633 Chiefs would like nothing better than to marshal their community members into a potent voting force that analysts say could decide the outcomes in as many as 51 federal ridings. They have seen the socio-economic gaps widen in the Harper years: students attending First Nations schools receive 30 per cent less federal funding than provincial schools provide; people in over 100 First Nations still lack safe supplies of potable water; and Ottawa spends over \$100 million a year in legal fees challenging the rights of the Indigenous peoples whose interests they are sworn to protect under Canada's constitution.

Leaders like National Chief Perry Bellegarde would be delighted if every Indigenous voter in Canada cast an Anything But Conservative ballot. Elections Canada even provided his organization, the Assembly of First Nations, almost half a million dollars to increase Native participation in the voting process.

So Canadians — and many First Nations citizens — were bewildered when Bellegarde announced that he would not do what he was asking his constituents to consider doing — vote. A week later he announced that he had [changed his mind](#) and was now convinced that voting was a legitimate option for First Nations citizens.

Some First Nations leaders have tried to explain their non-voting stance as a matter of principle. They say participating in another nation's governance process erodes First Nations sovereignty. But Bellegarde's flip-flop indicates he is aware of a growing sentiment among Indigenous people that it is foolhardy not to use all the weapons at their disposal to battle injustice. Since 1960 First Nations have enjoyed an extra right — they can vote in federal elections as well as choose their own leaders. Scholar Alan Cairns said this made First Nations “Citizens Plus.”

Those who support voting participation argue that casting ballots does no more to tarnish Indigenous sovereignty than, say, carrying provincial driving licences and federal passports, and using government-issued Status Cards to get 8-per-cent tax exemptions in

Walmart. Furthermore, if voting did jeopardize the nation-to-nation relationship, why would leaders encourage their followers to consider doing it?

There is a more likely reason for leaders tiptoeing around the voting issue, and now flip-flopping on it: First Nations are currently largely reliant on federal financial largesse. This dependency will exist until Canada honours its treaty promises to share the land and its resource wealth, settles 800 outstanding land claims and enacts legislation that implements the constitution's protection for inherent Indigenous rights to self-government.

Those same Canadians who stereotypically complain that “taxpayers' dollars” are being used as some sort of giant welfare cheque are electing governments who want this financial dependency to continue. Because with the money comes control.

The Conservatives actually launched their current election campaign three years ago when they pulled the rug out from under Indigenous representative organizations by launching a funding clawback that has now reached \$60 million. The message to 633 First Nations was clear: “If we can do this to your regional chiefs and grand chiefs, imagine what we can do to you.”

In a 2011 paper titled “Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record,” the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives wrote that “exercise of the fundamental freedom of speech in Canada has been curbed and discouraged by a federal government increasingly intolerant of even the mildest criticism or dissent. Particularly affected have been organizations dependent on government funding which advocate for human rights and women’s equality. Their voices have been stifled, some completely silenced, by cuts to their budgets.

“This blatant suppression of basic human rights by a government constitutionally responsible for guaranteeing their expression is unprecedented in Canada’s history.”

In the run-up to the Oct. 19 federal election, some First Nations leaders are acting like hostages who are allowed to phone family members, but with a gun to their heads, ready to discharge if they say the wrong thing about their captors.

They are trying to speak in a code they hope will achieve the desired outcome, without any harm coming to them or their next of kin.

***Maurice Switzer** is a citizen of the Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation. He has served as director of communications for the Assembly of First Nations and the Union of Ontario Indians.*

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/09/10/first-nations-leaders-held-hostage-by-conservatives.html>

Better gov't-First Nations relations possible, says expert

[Charelle Evelyn](#) / Prince George Citizen

September 9, 2015 09:13 PM

The past session of Parliament was marked with the rise of the Idle No More movement, the latest chapter in an often difficult relationship, but government relationships with First Nations don't have to be adversarial, according to a University of Victoria professor.

John Borrows, who holds the Canada Research Chair in indigenous law, said the United States boast a 40-year history where there hasn't been legislation that was fought or opposed on a wide scale.

"It actually started with (President Richard) Nixon who was on the right, a very conservative type of person who found that within conservative philosophy there was value in trying to empower local control of local affairs and then on the Democratic, or the liberal, side the equation, Democratic parties felt quite comfortable with working with Indian communities because it matches with their philosophy which is kind of help those who are maybe discriminated against or fare less well in society,"he said.

Instead, he said, it's a matter of political will.

"There's been a courting and cultivation of alliances between different political groups that are First Nations in the United States and the different wings of the parties that are dealing with indigenous issues. And we just haven't cultivated those same kinds of alliances (in Canada)," Borrows said.

After being in government for the past nine years, people generally have a sense of what they're going to get with another Conservative term when it comes to issues of importance to First Nations people.

"Right now the dividing line is between the government in power and those that aren't," said Borrows, "But between those that aren't, I don't think that there's quite a clear sense of how they're going to distinguish themselves from one another."

What's going to be key is closely examining each party's platform, said Carrier Sekani Tribal Council chief Terry Teegee.

There have been some platform pitches that resonated, such as the NDP commitment to launching an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women within their first 100 days of taking office and the Liberal Party's promises around First Nations education.

"The issue of resources will also be quite prominent, particularly here in British Columbia given the Tsilhqot'in case that came down last year (where the First Nation was

granted aboriginal title to lands outside of a reserve) and the B.C. treaty process not necessarily working," said Borrows.

"I think within aboriginal communities and within business and resource sectors with the pipeline and LNG, there's going to be a focus on what the parties are going to do in that regard."

Federal hopefuls should be reconsidering the environmental assessment process, added Teegee.

"I mean all the policies have been just, in our determination, watered down and it doesn't address a lot of our issues including title and rights as well as cumulative impacts," Teegee said.

"I think it would be something for all these parties to look at to get some responsible development."

On Sept. 2, Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde presented a package of federal election priorities aimed at closing the gap between the quality of life for First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians.

"The gap between First Nations and Canada is well documented. In recent years, Canada has ranked between sixth and eighth on the UN Human Development Index while First Nations fall between 63rd and 78th," said the priorities' report.

"The federal government's Community Well-Being Index shows that the gap has not changed at all since 1981."

The AFN's list includes measures the new federal government should be looking to undertake both within the first 100 days and first two years in office to address education, health and funding shortfalls as well as to reinvigorate treaty relationships and preserve indigenous languages.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/better-gov-t-first-nations-relations-possible-says-expert-1.2054606#sthash.xiVyrPxf.dpuf>

Will Yvonne Jones's re-election bid still be a cake walk?

[Investigates](#) | September 9, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#)



Liberal Yvonne Jones looked like a sure bet to be re-elected in [Labrador](#) on October 19th. However, [as we profiled yesterday](#), former MP Peter Penashue jumped into the campaign as the Conservative candidate last Friday. Both will be running against [Edward Rudkowski](#) of the NDP. And since Rudkowski has self-declared as Inuk, we will profile him tomorrow.

Jones has been MP since winning the seat in a byelection in 2013. The byelection was called after Penashue stepped down over allegations of spending irregularities during his narrow victory in 2011 over Liberal Todd Russell. Jones defeated Penashue by nearly 1900 votes. Jones has had a long career in public service. In 1991, she was elected mayor of her home town, Mary's Harbour. She was first elected to Newfoundland and Labrador's legislature in 1999 and became leader of the province's Liberal party in July 2010. However, she had to step down in 2011 as her recovery from breast cancer took longer than expected. More details on her biography can be found [on her Facebook page](#).

Jones has also been a long-time advocate of Aboriginal issues. She's volunteered on the board of the Labrador Metis, since renamed the Nunatukavut Community Council. She has been a frequent guest on APTN National News's Nation to Nation. And she has often advocated for a national inquiry on murdered and missing women, [most recently this past June](#) in Parliament. In the past Jones has been incorrectly identified as Metis. She is of Inuit heritage.



However, like the rest of her party, she voted in favour of the anti-terror law, bill C-51. It is of some concern in her riding, where many Aboriginal people have protested the large

hydroelectric project, Muskrat Falls. “I would say to people in my riding, it’s a very difficult task when you’re asked to [choose between] the protection of the country, and the protection of privacy. And that is a very, very difficult situation to be put in — however, that’s the situation [the Conservatives] put each of us in,” she said in [an interview this past spring](#). She repeated the promise that if elected to form government, the Liberals would identify shortcomings and make changes to the legislation.

As for Muskrat Falls, she has always given conditional support to the project. And has advocated that the jobs it generates first go to Labrador’s Aboriginal people, something she has accused the contractor of not fulfilling. “Subcontractors on the site are flying in workers from all across Canada. I’m not talking about Newfoundlanders here. In my opinion that Muskrat Falls project is big enough to employ all the people in Labrador that needs a job,” she told [APTN National News a year ago](#).

During the campaign so far, she has been talking about jobs and the hope that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau’s promise to increase spending on infrastructure trickles down to Labrador. She has also reminded voters of the [tragedy of Burton Winters](#) as a promise that a Liberal government would beef up search and rescue operations on the east coast.

It’s too early to tell if Penashue’s entrance into the race will affect Jones’s chances of being re-elected. The seat was projected to remain in Liberal hands before Penashue declared his candidacy. Jones has yet to comment publicly on her Conservative opponent. But as mentioned earlier, she easily defeated him in 2013.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/09/09/will-yvonne-joness-re-election-bid-still-be-a-cake-walk/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

KGHMI, Metis Nation strike Victoria Mine agreement

Friday, September 4, 2015 1:45:36 EDT AM



Sitting from left to right: Juliette Denis, PCMNO Regional Councillor for Region 5, France Picotte, Chair of the Metis Nation of Ontario and Robert Nowak, Deputy Project Manager for the KGHMI Victoria Mine Project. Standing from left to right: Nelson Montreuil, President of the Mattawa Metis Council, Richard Sarazin, President of the Sudbury Metis Council and Region 5 Captain of the Hunt and Marc Laurin, President of the North Bay Metis Council

The Metis Nation of Ontario and KGHM International Ltd. announced Thursday a deal covering development of the Victoria Mine project in Sudbury.

The memorandum of understanding will guide their working relationship as the mine is being prepared for a 2017 opening.

"This agreement is very important to the Metis people because it guarantees that Metis rights will be protected and the Metis way of life in the Sudbury area is being respected," Metis Nation of Ontario chair France Picotte said in a release.

"We are pleased to continue working with KGHM. Agreements like this one are another benefit that we see coming from the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement, which was first signed in 2008 and renewed this past year."

In 2012, KGHM announced plans to spend \$750-million to redevelop Victoria Mine near Worthington. One of Sudbury's oldest and most prolific mines, Victoria would employ more than 200 full-time workers by the time it goes back into full production in 2017. It would produce copper and nickel.

Ian Horne, community and permitting manager of KGHMI, said the company has been consulting with the Metis Nation on the planning and development of the Victoria Project since 2010.

"One of their key goals was to undertake a Traditional Knowledge and Land Use (TKLU) study of the project area before any significant development occurred." Horne said. "This study is currently underway and we look forward to integrating the knowledge gained into our project plan going forward."

The agreement sets out the way in which the local Metis community, as represented by the MNO's Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Consultation Committee, will be consulted regarding

the development of the mine and details how the parties will work together to address any potential impacts the project may have on Metis rights, interests and way of life.

Metis Nation of Ontario regional councillor Juliette S. Denis, chair of the Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Consultation Committee, the community "is very proud of the relationship that we have built with KGHM.

"We see this relationship as an opportunity to foster new collaborations while working together to protect our traditional values and way of life. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with KGHM as their project progresses."

The Metis Nation of Ontario represents the Metis people and communities within Ontario through a province-wide governance structure at the local, regional and provincial levels.

Direct Link: <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2015/09/04/kgelmi-metis-nation-strike-victoria-mine-agreement>

Waswanipi Cree of Northern Quebec make last stand to save their forest

[Kevin Dougherty, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: September 4, 2015 | Last Updated: September 4, 2015 6:22 PM EDT



Don Saganash walks in his trapline near the Broadback River. The Cree Nation of Waswanipi of Northern Quebec want to prevent further industrial logging of the forest in their traditional territory, the Broadback Valley. © Greenpeace

Waswanipi — Negotiating rough forestry roads in his black Ford F150 pickup, Don Saganash explains how he came to lead the Waswanipi Cree of Northern Quebec in their battle to save the last intact boreal forest on their territory.

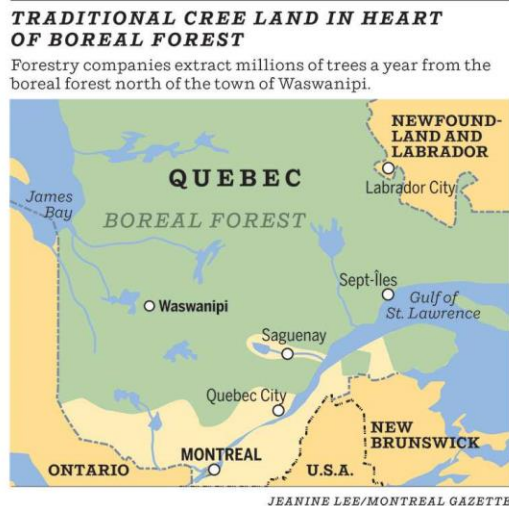
“My late dad, a year before he passed away, he appointed me as a tallyman,” Saganash recalls.

The role of the tallyman, a term dating back to fur-trading days, is to manage the traplines where beavers and other fur-bearing animals are caught, and also to safeguard the forest, rivers and lakes, as well as the fish, mammals and game birds that provide food for Cree communities.

The boreal forest north of the Waswanipi townsite is divided into 52 designated traplines, each averaging about 700 square kilometres in size.

“You take care of the trapline,” Allan Saganash Sr. told his son in 2006, adding this condition: “You have to try to block the forestry (industry).”

According to the Waswanipi Forest Authority, forestry companies now extract about 15 million trees a year from the 35,000-square-kilometre Waswanipi Eeyou Istchee (as the local Cree call their land). That’s an area about half the size of New Brunswick.



Since the 1970s, a 32,000-kilometre maze of access roads has been pushed through the traditional Waswanipi territory, disrupting habitat for the woodland caribou, moose and other animals.

Saganash, who also works as an ambulance driver for the Waswanipi Cree community of about 2,000, is proud there are no roads on the trapline his father entrusted to him — one of only three remaining Waswanipi traplines that has not been clear-cut.

“My land is not for sale,” Saganash told a company official who outlined plans to build a bridge across the Broadback River at Quénonisca Falls as part of a new forestry road to bring out the harvested trees.

Others meeting with the logging company before him had said yes — but Saganash said no, and the band chief couldn’t change his mind. And that’s when Saganash’s role as defender of the Waswanipi forest really took root.

Over the years that followed, others in the community — including the other tallymen who had accepted the logging company's deal — began to see things his way. And in 2012 the community got behind Saganash in proposing a larger protected area.

Today, about 90 per cent of the forest in Waswanipi's traplines has been logged, and the community is making a last stand to preserve the untouched portion, which includes the Broadback Valley.



A swath of land that has been clear-cut in the boreal forest in Northern Quebec. Kevin Dougherty / Montreal Gazette

From Aug. 16-21, nine journalists and nine Greenpeace campaigners travelled about 800 kilometres north from Montreal to the town of Waswanipi, then about 200 kilometres further north into Waswanipi territory to Quénonisca Falls, a narrowing of the Broadback River.

Greenpeace, which the Cree have enlisted in their efforts to save the Broadback Valley, helped organize the trip. Nicolas Mainville, Montreal-based Greenpeace forest campaigner, explained that the Cree wanted reporters (participants came from as far away as Germany) to see first-hand the damage that clear-cutting has done to the fragile boreal forest.

Travelling by heavy-duty pickup trucks, then high-powered aluminum boats, Saganash guided reporters to a Cree portage, dating back 400 years and more, where canoes were carried by land around the Quénonisca Falls.

“This is paradise for me,” he said. “When you stand at the rapids, you can feel the rolling thunder. It’s just like a load on your blood system, on your body.

“If it stops flowing, if it’s damaged, if there’s a bridge, your whole immune system will be gone.”

An view from aboard a helicopter showed the contrasting stands of intact forest and the devastated areas where the forest was clear-cut — a technique that removes all the trees except for a few that aren't deemed commercially viable.

“The Broadback was probably the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. Trees and trees as far as you could see,” Mandy Gull, deputy chief of Waswanipi, said after the tour. “It was like a very healthy lung.”

The land that had been clear-cut, she said, “reminded me of a scarred lung that would never heal. That’s what really got to me.”



Mandy Gull, deputy-chief of the Waswanipi Cree First Nation, stands in an area that has been clear-cut. Gull described such areas on their traditional territory as being like “a scarred lung that would never heal.”
© Greenpeace

On July 13, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, representing Quebec’s 18,000 Cree, signed a new agreement on co-management of forestry and protection of the woodland caribou. The agreement, which had been initiated by Cree lawsuits against Quebec for non-respect of a 2002 agreement on forestry management, says the Cree “shall not oppose the environmental authorization of access roads.”

The idea had been that the nine James Bay Cree chiefs would all sign. But Waswanipi Chief Marcel Happyjack was the one holdout, saying: “It’s not a good deal for us.” Instead, the Waswanipi Cree and their Greenpeace allies demonstrated their opposition to the deal outside the Quebec National Assembly.

So when it came time for the signing ceremony between Couillard and Coon Come, annexed to the deal was a letter from the premier affirming the government’s willingness “to have meaningful discussions” to bring in Waswanipi.

James O'Reilly, a wily Montreal lawyer who has represented the Cree for over 40 years, had told Saganash that the July agreement left a door open to save the Broadback Valley.

Saganash was miffed that Coon Come had not consulted Waswanipi beforehand on the new deal, and was upset that the 9,134-square-kilometre protected area did not include the Waswanipi section of the Broadback Valley.

“ ‘Calm down, Mr. Saganash,’ ” Saganash says O'Reilly told him. “ ‘Now it's your turn. You now have the power.’ ”



An aerial view of the Broadback River in Northern Quebec. The Waswanipi Cree who fish, hunt and trap on this land are fighting to prevent further clear-cutting of the boreal forest in this region. Kevin Dougherty / Montreal Gazette

And so the Waswanipi Cree hope the province's willingness to bring them into the fold will result in concrete measures to protect their land.

Waswanipi has established a task force to negotiate with the Cree Grand Council and the province. Quebec's top civil servant, secretary-general of the executive council Juan Roberto Iglesias, has named a Montreal expert as Quebec negotiator, and the two sides have agreed to a December deadline to redefine the protected area.

“It's just the beginning,” Saganash said, adding his goal is to phase out cutting in the boreal forest entirely. “Our plan is to stay here forever.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/waswanipi-cree-of-northern-quebec-make-last-stand-to-save-their-forest>

Doig River First Nation aims to benefit from LNG while protecting its land

Doig River has signed pipeline benefits agreements for both projects and will receive millions of dollars in construction-related milestone payments and continuing benefits

Sept. 8, 2015, midnight

[Mining & Energy](#)

By Patrick Blennerhassett

Elder Margaret Davis, Chief Norman Davis and elder May Apsassin at the treaty signing ceremony for the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations | Submitted



As the politics of resource extraction continue to unfold across the province, British Columbians are divided on the issue.

First Nations members have set up a camp on Lelu Island near Prince Rupert in hopes of killing the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal proposed for the area. The Enbridge Northern Gateway and Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipelines are both encountering various levels of opposition and drawing controversy, and BC Hydro recently won a BC Supreme Court battle against two First Nations bands that were seeking an injunction against its \$9 billion Site C dam project.

For Shona Nelson, the band administrator at Doig River First Nation, one thought keeps coming to mind.

“It’s all about balance; I think that’s the key word,” said Nelson.

Doig River, which has 132 members across about 1,000 hectares in the Peace River region, is part of the larger Treaty 8 Tribal Association in the area – an overarching advisory services body. Right now two LNG projects are in different stages of development in the area – TransCanada’s (TSX:TRP) Prince Rupert Gas Transmission project and Coastal GasLink Pipeline project. Doig River has signed pipeline benefits

agreements for both projects and will receive millions of dollars in construction-related milestone payments and continuing benefits.

Nelson said working with TransCanada has been smooth, but she adds that the same can't be said for the provincial government.

"In terms of the regulatory agencies, the province is problematic to work with at times," she said. "Because we had to fight to get on the consultation board for the environmental assessment, and then going through the regulatory process with the [BC] Oil and Gas Commission had its challenges."

In an emailed response, BC Oil and Gas Commission spokesman Alan Clay said the commission "is proud of its partnership with Doig River First Nation around a pilot-project liaison program."

"Working closely with commission staff, the community liaison supports creating greater community environmental awareness of oil and gas operations which includes ongoing development, safety, emergency management and response and restoration activities occurring within Doig's consultation area."

Members of Doig River have already started training for jobs such as heavy equipment operation and pipeline maintenance, in anticipation of getting work on these two LNG projects, Nelson said. She added the idea is to take part in the process and enjoy a share of its economic benefits, rather than fight the project at every step.

"Doig River takes a very proactive approach for our members and contractors to be prepared for the project and be competitive and get our foot in the door."

The province issued environmental assessment certificates for both projects in the fall of 2014. Various other federal, provincial and local permits still need to be obtained before ground can be broken.

Estimates of the number of jobs during construction, and when each plant is operational, have not been released.

Doig River Chief Norman Davis said in a news release that the First Nation wants certain concerns to be taken into account.

"Our pipeline benefit agreements with the province have created even greater possibilities for economic development within the Doig River First Nation," Davis said. "Development can't happen at the expense of the environment, though, which is why we look forward to further work with the province on environmental stewardship opportunities."

Nelson added that local support for the projects will vanish if environmental issues are not given serious attention.

“With every project there’s always environmental concerns because there’s always the concern about cumulative impacts – the cumulative effects of any resource development on our members’ ability to practise fair rights on the land,” he said. “We do a lot of work on traditional land-use studies with our lands department and membership to make sure key issues and concerns are addressed.”

Garry Oker, who was the chief of Doig River from 2002 to 2005 and now runs his own cultural employment strategy consulting business, said it’s important not to lose sight of the big picture.

“The challenge has always been going project by project, and the process is not really designed to look at the cumulative impacts of all these projects together.”

Direct Link: <https://www.biv.com/article/2015/9/doig-river-first-nation-aiming-benefit-ling-while-p/>

B.C. First Nation gets Nexen fracking water licence overturned

Science behind the licence fundamentally flawed, province acted in bad faith, appeal board rules

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 08, 2015 12:32 PM PT Last Updated: Sep 08, 2015 1:23 PM PT



Fracking involves pumping water and chemicals deep underground to crack shale rock formations and release natural gas for extraction. (Brennan Linsley/The Associated Press)

British Columbia's Environmental Appeal Board has overturned a water licence granted to a company for shale gas fracking in northeastern British Columbia, ruling the licence was based on bad science and bad faith.

The long term water licence granted in 2012 allowed Nexen Inc. to pump 1.4 million cubic metres of water a year from Tsea Lake and Tsea River, located about 100 kilometres northeast of Fort Nelson.

The Fort Nelson First Nation successfully challenged the licence.

[In its ruling, the board said](#) the science behind the licence is fundamentally flawed. It also ruled the province acted in bad faith when it did not properly consult with the Fort Nelson First Nation, breaching a constitutional duty to consider potential adverse effects of the water licence.

Clear message

The chief of the Fort Nelson First Nation, Liz Logan, said the ruling sends a clear message to oil companies and the B.C. government that the liquefied natural gas industry will not proceed at the expense of the environment and treaty rights.

"They saw that we were just getting lip service to these concerns we were raising," Logan said in a statement issued on Tuesday morning. "Officials were deciding on the outcome before they even consulted with us. And the board relied on internal emails that they got which show that the officials were going through the motions of meeting with us just to show that they were responding to us.

"Granting this licence was a major mistake by the province," Logan added. "Our members have always used the Tsea Lake area in our territory to hunt, trap, and live on the land. The company pumped water out of the lake, even during drought conditions. There were major impacts on the lake, fish, beavers, and surrounding environment.

"We want to work with the province and industry on sustainable development in our territory, but we are being ignored," Logan said. "We have in the past, and are willing to do so moving forward, as long as our treaty rights are respected and the public interest in environmentally sustainable development is upheld."

Government could appeal

The B.C. government said it was reviewing the board's decision and considering next steps, which could include an application for judicial review through the B.C. Supreme Court.

"B.C. has one of the most up-to-date regulatory frameworks in the world for shale gas development, which is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure public safety and protect the environment," a statement from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources said.

"Government takes its duty to consult seriously and remains committed to working closely with local First Nations throughout the province on resource development."

Nexen had not yet to returned CBC's calls for comment.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-first-nation-gets-nexen-fracking-water-licence-overturned-1.3219589>

B.C. First Nations to 'do whatever it takes' to stop grizzly bear trophy hunters

By Bethany Lindsay, Vancouver Sun September 8, 2015



The sighting of a grizzly bear with at least one cub near Whistler is cause for optimism for the species' future in southwest B.C. but is also a warning to hikers to beware in the backcountry.

First Nations along B.C.'s north and central coasts are vowing to do whatever it takes to enforce a ban on trophy grizzly bear hunting in their traditional territories.

The Coastal First Nations alliance first announced the ban in 2012, but say that because the provincial government still issues trophy-hunting permits, bears are still being killed for their heads and paws.

"It's wrong on so many levels. Ethically, it's not supported, but I know in my culture as well it's not supported," Kitasoo/Xai'xais Chief Doug Neasloss said.

"But the government just keeps issuing these tags for people who want to blast these bears."

The aboriginal Coastal Guardians Watchmen that patrol the coast promise they will be stepping up their monitoring and enforcement efforts when the fall grizzly bear hunt opens on some parts of the coast this week. The first step will be to educate hunters, informing them that the local First Nations do not support trophy hunting.

The next step is enforcement.

“We’ll do whatever it takes. I guess I should be careful what I say, but on the ground, I think if we were to see someone responsible for this, I think it would be very interesting,” Neasloss said.

“There are some communities that would literally drive between boats trying to shoot bears. Some people will stay and scare the bears away.”

The First Nations also plan to monitor hunting boats as they move from territory to territory.

Enforcing the ban is key in a region where First Nations are trying to build a tourism industry based on non-lethal wildlife viewing and aboriginal culture, according to Neasloss.

“(Tourism) is a long-term sustainable industry. Jobs are kind of hard to find in our remote communities, and tourism’s one of them,” he said.

He added that it’s hard to tell how much of an impact the ban is having so far, but the number of bears killed within his nation’s territory around Klemtu has gone down since the prohibition was announced three years ago.

There are other signs that the ban is working, too. A small number of local hunters have handed their grizzly tags over to the First Nations in recognition of the prohibition, and anti-hunting advocates are applying for licences with no intention of ever using them.

The vast majority of British Columbians are against trophy hunting, according to a 2013 survey. Just 10 per cent of those polled by Insights West supported the practice.

Direct Link:

http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/first+nations+whatever+takes+stop+grizzly+bear+trophy+hunters/11348529/story.html?_lsa=d8b6-9fcb

Native tribe fights to save Boreal forest in Quebec

Clément Sabourin, [AFP](#)

Sep. 8, 2015, 3:40 AM

For the Cree, protecting the forest also means protecting the reindeer, moose and other wildlife being pushed further and further north by logging and climate change.

The Cree grand chief signed an accord with the Quebec government in July to preserve 9,134 square kilometers of woodland caribou habitat along the 450-kilometer Broadback, which flows through the taiga to the Arctic.

But Waswanipi trappers say the deal does too little to safeguard their land. They point out that half of the areas protected from logging under the accord were already off-limits to forestry firms.

Since the government of Quebec unveiled a conservation plan for the north that paradoxically opened the door to more logging along the Broadback river, the town of Waswanipi has felt under siege.

- Not ours to sell -

Forestry firm representatives have approached Don Saganash about his hunting lands in the area.

"They came to talk to me about building a bridge because the river is narrower here, but the Broadback is not for sale," he said of the crystal clear river where sturgeon, pike and walleye swim.

Seeing trucks loaded with logs drive by "is like getting stabbed in the gut," said the retired ambulance driver.

"My father used to say: the land is not ours to sell. God provided us with the land to live in harmony with nature."

The forest is at the heart of these northern peoples' identity. Newborns are baptized in ceremonies that include walking on pine needles and circling a conifer placed in front of a tipi.

For generations, native hunters have kept a watch over this land, keeping tallies on the fauna and inspecting trap lines.

Snowmobiles may have replaced dogs and sleds and boats with outboard motors displaced canoes, but many of the 16,000 Crees living in Quebec still uphold their nomadic ancestors' traditions, even though they were themselves forced to settle down four decades ago.

- 'Save the Broadback' -

At that time, the Quebec government started building massive hydro-electric dams in the north to supply cheap electricity to the province and northeastern US states.

In exchange for supporting these projects, the Cree gained some political independence and significant funding.

Quebec also recognized their historical hunting rights but the state maintained control of natural resources within its borders.

"The Quebec government does have the right to come here and extract these resources, but these aren't just resources, it's a way of life," said Mandy Gull.

From a climate perspective, "the Boreal forest cover is essential for everybody," she added.

To help them in their fight against forestry firms, the Cree recruited Greenpeace, which on this late August day deployed a massive banner in the outback, legible from the sky that reads: "Save the Broadback!"

Greenpeace's activism, however, has angered the Quebec government and it is embroiled in litigation with forestry giant Resolu Forest Products that alleges it was defamed by the group. The company is seeking Can\$7 million in damages.

The feud led one of Europe's largest publishers Axel Springer in late August to stop buying paper produced in Quebec, saying it no longer felt comfortable supporting a forestry firm that is battling aboriginals and environmental activists.

Hoping to increase pressure on other pulp and paper buyers, Greenpeace invited foreign journalists to tour the forest to see the impact of logging firsthand.

"Few people in Quebec have ever laid eyes on such pristine forestland, it is truly something very rare indeed," said Greenpeace biologist Nicolas Mainville.

"We have to take a strong stand when it comes to protecting the forest from a company that wants to build a bridge over this river to get to the other side and cut down one of the last virgin forests in Quebec."

Don Saganash long struggled alone to safeguard his ancestral lands, but now he stands supported by several aboriginal groups.

And he has vowed to "fight to the death" to protect his lands from logging.

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-native-tribe-fights-to-save-boreal-forest-in-quebec-2015-9#ixzz3ILr3r77i>

Fading B.C. salmon runs imperil First Nations' traditions, says veteran observer

By Kent Spencer, The Province September 10, 2015

B.C.'s wild salmon catch on the Fraser River has become so poor over the years it could eventually bring an end to traditional aboriginal ways, predicts First Nations fish adviser Ernie Crey.

"I think we're looking at the gradual biological extinction of salmon," Crey said. "People say I'm a pessimist, but I really wonder if this is the end of our aboriginal society."

He blames hot weather, low snowpacks, drought, over-fishing, El Niño and a weather phenomenon called the Blob for creating conditions that played havoc with the health of salmon this season.

Crey, 66, has been studying the situation for 35 years, first as a member of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and then as an adviser to the Sto:lo First Nation.

This year he was focused on the paltry sockeye returns on the Fraser, which he said follow a long-term trend.

In 2010, an unusually good year, First Nations fishermen caught more than a million sockeye, part of the 30 million available in a fishery that was the largest in 100 years. This year their catch was just 150,000.

"Those missing fish represent a lot of dinners," Crey said.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada predicted 6.7 million sockeye would arrive on the Fraser, but just 2.4 million showed up, leaving 4.3 million unaccounted for.

First Nations people were not the only ones stung. Sports and commercial sockeye fisheries were completely closed on the Fraser in 2015; the pinks fishery was also cancelled.

Tough times also arrived for ancillary businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tackle retailers and gas stations.

Fisheries scientist Brian Riddell, president of the Pacific Salmon Foundation, thinks Crey is right to be concerned because sockeye is a "critical" food for First Nations.

"This year's run on the Fraser will be one of the lowest returns we've seen," Riddell said.

But he said a biological extinction of the sockeye "is not going to happen in the short term."

“That doesn’t mean lots of people aren’t concerned about things like the melting of the ice fields. Our climate is going to change, but we’re talking decades, not just this year,” he said.

Crey said the trickle-down effects of this year’s small harvest will have the greatest effect on First Nations people, whose average income was just \$28,000 in 2010. Statistics Canada reported that it was 43 per cent less than that of non-aboriginal people; the First Nations population of B.C. is 232,000.

According to Crey’s reading of the situation, a way of life that has lasted thousands of years is in jeopardy.

The fish hold a special place in First Nations lore. They are believed to be children of “salmon people” who live in the ocean and have a spirit given to them by the Creator.

Revenues from fishing have traditionally provided moderate resources for basics such as food, clothing and housing.

“It’s not just the food, it’s the social activity which brings communities together,” said Crey. “Grandma, mom, dad and the kids go out on the river. Everyone’s doing something healthy and good.”

Fishing is ingrained in people like Charles Douglas, 57, a lawyer and First Nations advocate who has been casting gill nets near Yale all his life.

“The bounty from the seas and rivers sustained our culture. Our grocery stores were the rivers,” Douglas said.

The experience is a “thrill.”

“Every year we get excited. It’s more than fishing, it’s about re-energizing yourself and feeling good about being back in nature,” he said.

In the old days, the season lasted from March until November; this year’s sockeye fishery was over in eight days. Douglas caught just 70 fish at a place where he was once able to net 600 in just a few hours.

Poor returns were blamed on weather conditions that reduced oxygen levels and made fish more susceptible to disease.

“I saw a lot that were starved; some had skin lesions,” Douglas said.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada said some fisheries were cancelled to allow the maximum number of fish to get to the spawning grounds.

“This year’s sockeye run was obviously very disappointing,” said Jennifer Nener, Lower Fraser area director for Fisheries and Oceans.

“Clearly, the (First Nations) community is going to feel this,” she said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/technology/fading+salmon+runs+imperil+first+nations+traditions+says/11351338/story.html>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Queen’s Bench judge rules in dispute between Sask. Metis factions

By Staff The Canadian Press, September 4, 2015 9:37 am



Judge rules Metis Nation – Saskatchewan president failed to prove other council members ignored court order to call legislative assembly.

SASKATOON – A Court of Queen’s Bench judge has issued a ruling in a dispute among members of the Metis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS) and the Provincial Metis Council. Justice Brian Scherman said MNS president Robert Doucette failed to prove that other members of the council, including vice-president Gerald Morin, ignored a court order to call a Metis Legislative Assembly.

Scherman called it a case of “Metis battling Metis.”

He said the participants “do not pit muskets, Sharp and Winchester rifles against government troops, military carbines and Gatling guns.”

Instead, he said the field of battle consists of “partisan politicking and strategic posturing.”

Doucette said the bottom line is the group needs to call a council meeting as soon as possible while Morin said the whole thing is a debacle.

“The real issue in all this costly litigation has been the contempt that Robert Doucette has for the democratic values and traditions of the Metis Nation in Saskatchewan,” says Morin.

“As the judge noted, the MNS Constitution and its democratic processes and ideals have been subverted for years.”

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2203460/queens-bench-judge-rules-in-dispute-between-sask-metis-factions/>

Local Metis communities agree to fall under one banner

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Thursday, September 3, 2015 5:17:53 MDT PM



Ron Quintal, president of Fort McKay Metis, watches as representatives from Metis communities in Fort Chipewyan, Conklin and Fort McMurray, congratulate each other for signing a memorandum of understanding. The document allows the four communities to work closer together when advocating with government and industry. The document was signed at the McMurray Metis lodge in Fort McMurray, Alta. on Thursday September 3, 2015. Vincent McDermott/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network

The four major Metis communities in the oilsands have signed an agreement that would place them under one banner when negotiating with industry and government.

On Thursday, Metis leaders from Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray and Conklin gathered in Fort McMurray to sign a memorandum of understanding, rebranding their communities into the Wood Buffalo Metis.

The creation of the single entity allows the Metis communities to promote a coordinated message and pool resources on challenges facing their communities.

“We’ve been working together for many years and it was time to formalize our cooperation,” said Ron Quintal, president of the Fort McKay Metis.

Wood Buffalo’s Metis communities have shared common problems with municipal development and industrial expansion.

Fort Chipewyan sees itself as a community on the receiving end of the oilsands and urban expansion because it is downstream from developments.

Fort McMurray’s Metis community is not only concerned with affordable housing issues, but is also concerned about the environmental impact urban expansion has on nearby traditional lands.

Fort McKay and Conklin are surrounded by open pit mines and SAGD sites respectively.

“We here in northeastern Alberta and Wood Buffalo are faced with much different challenges, much different impacts than your typical Metis community around the province,” said Quintal.

Wood Buffalo Metis already has a lengthy list of concerns to raise with industry and government.

They include the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People as law, as promised by Premier Rachel Notley earlier this summer, support for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and the creation of a formal Metis consultation policy.

Locally, the group advocates a commitment from the province and federal government to support the Cumulative Environmental Management Association.

They are also advocating improvements to health care, police presence, education and social housing in the rural areas, as well as Fort Chipewyan’s food security status. The group also wants to see improvements to Highway 881 and the creation of an all-weather road to Saskatchewan.

The agreement does not dissolve the sovereignty of the four organizations. Quintal says it does not render the Metis Nation of Alberta obsolete, but helps the communities tackle local issues.

“I was just thinking yesterday that if I wanted to do something, I was doing it by myself. But today we’ve got a group that goes from Conklin to the Northwest Territories border,” said Fred “Jumbo” Fraser, president of Fort Chipewyan’s Metis local. “What more could you ask for? We’ve got all the help in the world now so look out, it’s going to be good.”

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/09/03/local-metis-communities-agree-to-fall-under-one-banner>

Premier, B.C. First Nations aim to reach reconciliation deal

Dirk Meissner / The Canadian Press
September 7, 2015 01:00 AM



Premier Christy Clark attends an event in Kitimat with Chief Sammy Robinson of the Haisla First Nation in June 2014 to mark a land sale to the Haisla. Photograph By Jonathan Hayward

At least 500 British Columbia aboriginal leaders are set to meet this week with Premier Christy Clark on how all sides can deal with the implications of a historic land rights ruling from Canada's highest court.

The decision that granted aboriginal title to the Tsilhqot'in Nation in B.C.'s central Interior permeates all government and First Nations relations, including potentially lucrative and environmentally sensitive resource projects.

The June 2014 court ruling, which Tsilhqot'in Chief Roger William calls a legal weapon, is poised to dominate proceedings at the gathering, set for Wednesday and Thursday.

Clark said last year's all-chiefs meeting, which marked the first time First Nations leaders met with a government and its cabinet, was a major step in the long road towards reconciliation rather than a retreat back to courtrooms.

However, First Nations leaders left disappointed, saying the province did not adopt their document, which sought to establish government support for aboriginal rights and title to lands, including revenue sharing.

But a spokeswoman the First Nations Summit, B.C.'s largest aboriginal organization, said she expects the chiefs will now debate a proposed joint government-First Nations document with the aim to move towards reconciliation.

Cheryl Casimer said the chiefs were not prepared to attend the gathering without such a potential deal.

"We said there's no way the leadership council is going to be asking the (First Nations) leadership in this province to come back together in September for just a photo-op," Casimer said. "We need to have something. There needs to be something substantial."

Casimer called the package a "form of a commitment document working on a joint agenda, a joint action plan on how to be able to move forward based on the principles of Tsilhqot'in," she said of the landmark court ruling.

Clark has said ignoring the Supreme Court of Canada decision would put B.C.'s future in peril. She said she wants to use the ruling to work together with aboriginals.

The Tsilhqot'in were granted over 1,750 kilometres of land in the remote Nemiah Valley southwest of Williams Lake. It was the first time in Canadian history that a First Nation was given title to such a vast piece of land.

Chief Joe Alphonse, one six Tsilhqot'in Nation chiefs, said the ruling ensures First Nations are involved and can influence decisions being considered by government and business.

"They've had control of our resources, and with this court case that shifted that balance of power back to a more respectful place for First Nations people," he said.

Alphonse said the Tsilhqot'in and B.C. government are close to signing a separate deal that sets the ground rules for governance decisions from parks, permits and investments in Tsilhqot'in territory.

The agreement was scheduled to be complete last spring, but "we're coming close to where we want to be," he said.

Casimer said the talks scheduled for this week include individual First Nations meeting with cabinet ministers and one-on-one meetings between the premier and chiefs.

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/premier-b-c-first-nations-aim-to-reach-reconciliation-deal-1.2051641#sthash.GuCeam1k.dpuf>

B.C. aboriginal leaders decry government relationship in open letter

Chiefs of 10 northern B.C. First Nations say province ignoring concerns over Site C and LNG developments

By Tamsyn Burgmann, The Canadian Press Posted: Sep 08, 2015 6:04 PM PT Last Updated: Sep 09, 2015 6:16 AM PT



Chief Liz Logan of the Fort Nelson First Nation, is shown in this handout photo in Vancouver, holding an original Treaty 8 medallion that was given to her great grandfather when he signed the treaty on her First Nation's behalf. (Kirsten Brynelsen/The Canadian Press)

People once paddled great distances to set up fishing camps on the land where Liz Logan's family has lived for generations in northern British Columbia.

But now Tsinhia Lake has yellowed, the fish have died and her family must carry in bottled water to drink.

The damage from oil and gas industries has prompted Logan, chief of the Fort Nelson First Nation, to help form an alliance with other aboriginal leaders against the provincial government.

The signatories say concerns about massive developments in their territories are not being addressed.

The group, composed of leaders from the B.C. coast to the Alberta boundary, announced its formation on Tuesday with the release of an open letter to Premier Christy Clark.

"We're trying to get their attention. We're calling for this government to come back and (agree to) a relationship, because right now there is no relationship," Logan said.

It would be as if the government came and took out someone's backyard pool without asking, she said.

Historic land deal talks imminent

Chiefs of 10 northern B.C. First Nations have signed the letter, which says the province has ignored significant legal victories by aboriginals and is blocking them from managing their own territories.

The letter was sent ahead of talks this week in Vancouver between First Nations and B.C. politicians on the topic of the [historic Tsilhqot'in land deal](#).

The June 2014 court ruling granted aboriginal title to more than 1,700 square kilometres of land, but the chiefs say they've seen little change in how the province deals with their claims.

"This government is basically refusing to look at the big picture of all the developments that are happening in all of our respective territories," Logan said.

Among the projects of concern are proposed [liquefied natural gas](#) facilities and the [Site C hydroelectric dam](#), which entered its first phase of construction in July.

The open letter lists three major reasons the alliance believes First Nations' interests are threatened:

- no "new relationship" despite successful court challenges
- the government's refusal to assess potential industrial impacts on the environment
- a provincial review process that allows industry to set the agenda for development

"We are not opposed to development," reads the letter, which calls on the government for a more civil, legally consistent and logical approach to project implementation.

Concern over First Nations' rights

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs said its members are being given "lip service" and will raise those concerns at meetings over the coming days, said vice-president Bob Chamberlin.

He said First Nations have given up enough benefits for British Columbians.

"When will their rights finally be first and foremost?" he asked.

Chamberlin said the alliance's formation is a strong signal that no progress has been made despite repeated meetings with government officials.

Clark said Tuesday she would refrain from addressing the issues until after this week's talks.

"It is always our goal to make sure we are consulting and accommodating First Nations fairly, in a way that even goes above and beyond the law of the country," she said at an unrelated news conference.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-aboriginal-land-talks-1.3220188>

Northern B.C. aboriginal leaders speak in unified voice for 'fair' consultation

By [The Canadian Press](#) in [News](#), [Energy](#) | September 9th 2015



Fort Nelson First Nation chief Liz Logan.

VANCOUVER — People once paddled great distances to set up fishing camps on the land where Liz Logan's family has lived for generations in northern British Columbia. Now Tsinhia Lake has yellowed, the fish have died and her family must carry in bottled water to drink.

The damage from oil and gas industries has prompted Logan, chief of the Fort Nelson First Nation, to help form an alliance with other aboriginal leaders against the provincial government. The signatories say concerns about massive developments in their territories are not being addressed.

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Direct Link: <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/09/09/news/northern-bc-aboriginal-leaders-speak-unified-voice-fair-consultation>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Ontario First Nations to hold inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women

Chiefs of Ontario launch digital fundraiser called Who Is She to pay for public inquiry

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 09, 2015 5:11 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 09, 2015 6:33 PM ET



Ontario chiefs announce a campaign to pay for their own inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. From left: Deputy Chief Denise Stonefish, Regional Chief Isadore Day and Chief Ava Hill. (CBC)

Ontario First Nations will launch their own inquiry into missing and murdered women and girls, saying the issue is too important to wait for the outcome of the upcoming federal election.

To pay for the inquiry, Chiefs of Ontario — a group representing 163 communities — has launched a website called Who Is She where the public can make donations. The site also features photographs of the missing and murdered, as well as messages from their families.



Chiefs of Ontario launch fundraising campaign to pay for their own inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. (CBC)

"Every indigenous woman and girl should feel safe in this country," said Denise Stonefish, deputy grand chief of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, which is aligned with Chiefs of Ontario.

"First Nations families cannot wait for Ottawa to stop indigenous women and girls from disappearing."

Both the federal Liberals and New Democrats have vowed to launch a public inquiry if elected, something the Conservative government has refused to do.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne applauded the Ontario Chiefs for starting the "Who Is She" campaign.

"I think that it is laudable that they are going to be doing a campaign here in Ontario," Wynne said. "I will continue to raise my voice in the call for a national inquiry."

It isn't known how many of the missing and murdered are from that province, but Isadore Day, head of Chiefs of Ontario, says the organization has been working with the Ontario Provincial Police and the attorney general's office to find out.

Day says an inquiry would not replace a national public inquiry commissioned by the federal government.

"Canada must be held accountable for its inaction on this issue," he said.

"It's a wonderful time to get the message out there, don't you think," Day said of the federal election. "If we were to wait until the election campaign was over we would be remiss — we would have missed a good opportunity."

World attention

The staggeringly high numbers of missing and murdered aboriginal women has drawn world attention.

A 2015 United Nations report found that young aboriginal women are five times more likely to die under violent circumstances, as compared with their non-aboriginal counterparts.

Last year, the RCMP released a report that said there were 1,181 cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women between 1980 and 2012. Earlier this year, [the force updated those numbers](#) and said an additional 32 aboriginal women have been slain and 11 more have disappeared since 2013.

There is no dollar figure set for the fundraising campaign, and Day acknowledged that public inquiries can be very expensive, but said that wasn't the chiefs' main concern.

"The urgency of this matter is one that has prompted us to not look at the total cost of an inquiry," he said. "What we're proposing here is we're going to do whatever we can, within our might, with the goodwill of our partners, to establish the beginning phases of that inquiry."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/ontario-first-nations-to-hold-inquiry-into-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-1.3220844>

First Nations chiefs launch fundraiser to pay for inquiry into missing, killed women

Ontario chiefs hopes 'Who is she' campaign will mobilize people and get message out about crisis.



Deputy Grand Chief Denis Stonefish, left, Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day and Chief Ava Hill announce on Wednesday a new campaign called "Who Is She" that will help raise funds and awareness for

the implementation of an Ontario First Nations-led inquiry process into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

By: Keith Leslie The Canadian Press, Published on Wed Sep 09 2015

First Nations chiefs in Ontario launched a fundraising campaign Wednesday to help pay for their own public inquiry into [missing and murdered aboriginal women](#).

Ontario regional Chief Isadore Day said the chiefs don't want to wait any longer for the federal government to agree to a public inquiry, and noted the online campaign will help focus on the need for a national probe.

The Assembly of First Nations, the United Nations and several provinces have all called for a national inquiry into the missing and murdered women, but nothing is being done, added Day.

"We're not prepared or willing any further to wait for the federal government or wait for a national organization to begin this process," he said. "We have support across the country, but somebody had to step forward and do it."

The RCMP reported there were more than 1,200 First Nations' women across Canada who were murdered or disappeared between 1980 and 2014, with [many victims being killed by men they lived with or knew](#).

Aboriginal leaders know they must act now to protect women in their communities, who can no longer be treated as "disposable" and be "tossed away" by society, said Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish.

"First Nations families cannot wait for Ottawa to stop indigenous women and girls from disappearing," said Stonefish. "So First Nations leadership knows it must take action to address the violence, and the most effective way of stemming this systemic issue is to engage in a First Nations-driven inquiry process."

Canadians will want to address the issue once they learn the facts about the missing and murdered women, said Day.

"If we can get the information about via the 'Who Is She' campaign, people are going to be compelled emotionally to say 'what can I do,' because I, as a Canadian, do not want to say . . . I did nothing."

There is no dollar figure set for the fundraising campaign, and Day acknowledged that public inquiries can be very expensive, but said that wasn't the chiefs' main concern at this point.

"The urgency of this matter is one that has prompted us to not look at the total cost of an inquiry," he said. "We're going to do whatever we can, within our might, with the goodwill of our partners, to establish the beginning phases of that inquiry."

The process started by the Ontario chiefs will help the families of the missing and murdered aboriginal women prepare for a national inquiry, said Day.

“It really is about mobilizing the people, getting the message out there and creating the dialogue,” he said. “We’ve got a meagre start to the beginning of this inquiry process, (but) we’re going to keep going.”

Premier Kathleen Wynne applauded the Ontario chiefs for starting the “Who Is She” campaign, which will feature photos of missing aboriginal women and messages from their families, along with an online donation mechanism.

“I will continue to raise my voice in the call for a national inquiry,” she said.

In a speech prepared for the official launch of the campaign, Wynne said “what has been done to indigenous populations across Canada is not normal, but shameful,” and called it “a dark chapter” in our shared history.

“Canada has failed indigenous communities,” she said. “Canada is not safe for aboriginal women.”

The Conservative government has consistently refused to call a public inquiry into the missing and murdered women, saying more study isn’t needed because more than 80 per cent of the killings are solved by police. Both the Liberals and New Democrats have promised to call a public inquiry if they win the Oct. 19 election.

“It’s a wonderful time to get the message out there, don’t you think,” Day said of the federal election.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/09/09/first-nations-chiefs-launch-fundraiser-to-pay-for-inquiry-into-missing-killed-women.html>

Stephen Harper’s longest war: missing and murdered Indigenous women

[National News](#) | September 9, 2015 by [Kenneth Jackson](#)



Kenneth Jackson

APTN National News

OTTAWA – Soon after Stephen Harper began his first term as prime minister in 2006 he set out to cut \$1 billion in funding across the board and one of the hardest hit departments was Status of Women.

Satellite offices were closed across the country and funding was cut nearly in half.

That was on the surface.

Behind the scenes, Harper also wanted to cut funding to the Native Women's Association of Canada that paid for its Sisters in Spirit program that was, for the first time in history, officially tallying the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

“(Harper) was trying, but we fought back. I told them I wouldn't do that and I'd go public,” said former NWAC president Beverley Jacobs. “I would have sued Canada for breach of contract. I had an awesome women legal team at that time.”

The money the government was after was the \$5 million, spread out over five years, to fund the research into Sisters in Spirit first announced by the Liberal government under prime minister Paul Martin in 2005.

It was written in a contract.

The Harper government backed off, but they weren't done.

Harper put NWAC in a proverbial chokehold – described as a slow and meticulous “death” that has left NWAC a shell of its former self today where staff “wait for the axe to drop” at any moment.

And during Harper's time in office almost 300 Indigenous women have been found murdered, died under suspicious circumstances or went missing according to data [collected for APTN](#), as of May 2015, by well known researcher Maryanne Pearce.

This while calls ring out across the country for a national inquiry that Harper says isn't needed.

This story is just as much a timeline of the events since 2005 as it is a narrative of Harper's policy on missing and murdered Indigenous women as he seeks to become the longest serving prime minister in history on Oct. 19.

SISTERS IN SPIRIT – \$5 million

Sherry Lewis was the executive director of NWAC from 2003 to 2007.

In May of 2005, the Liberal government came to NWAC with a proposal to fund a five-year program to look into missing and murdered Indigenous women – what would be called Sisters in Spirit.

Lewis said NWAC was at the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York on May 23, 2005 when she was approached by Fred Caron, then assistant deputy minister, of then, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Caron offered NWAC \$5 million over five years and part of the deal was NWAC had to take part in a press conference at the UN meetings.

The deal was approved by Beverley Jacobs and NWAC's board of directors.

"It rolled out from there. We negotiated what that was all about," said Lewis. "At the time, we ensured the ownership of the name, brand, everything belonged to NWAC."



Sherry Lewis, left, as seen at the United Nations in New York in 2005 announcing the Sisters in Spirit funding with Fred Caron, right of Lewis, assistant deputy minister for Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada. United Nations photo.

Lewis said NWAC also enjoyed a "positive relationship" with the Liberal government. Frequently, staff was invited to take part in special gatherings, meet foreign dignitaries and the government would promote the organization.

When the Harper government took control, it was like “night and day” said Lewis.

“There was a lot of that stuff going on (under the Liberals). It kept us busy all the time,” she said. “When the Conservatives came in it was like a door slammed shut.”

Lewis said the invitations to meet dignitaries no longer arrived and NWAC was in the dark.

“They gave us minimally what was required under Sisters in Spirit,” she said.

As Sisters in Spirit was in full swing the Harper government demanded documents on everything – every call from media, every trip taken, any and everything said former executive director Kate Rexe, who joined NWAC in April of 2009.

Annual reports to Status of Women were binders four inches thick documenting their every move.

“When I requested to only submit a 25-page report (because of the intense scrutiny and time it took to compile the report) they insisted that wasn’t enough and wanted everything we had done including numbers, media interviews, meetings, articles, presentations,” said Rexe. “Mainly, because I don’t think anyone believed we were actually doing what we said we would do: report the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.”



Kate Rexe, former executive director of Sisters in Spirit. APTN photo

Rexe believes there’s only one reason for this after their first report in 2009 detailing stories from families of missing and murdered women started to get media attention. Rexe, herself, spoke to the media a number of times to push the message.

One time she said her comments enraged former Status of Women minister Helena Guergis who called NWAC’s office trying to get her fired.

“As much as Minister Guergis may not have liked me (or) NWAC pushing the government or the attention in the media, I think she was the scapegoat for cabinet. It is my belief that she was pushing hard to have the work of SIS continue and the (Prime Minister’s Office) didn’t want to see it go any further,” said Rexe.

APTN reached out to Guergis, through her lawyer, but never heard back.

With funding to the SIS program scheduled to end in March 2010, NWAC released its second report saying there was 582 Indigenous women in Canada who were missing or had been murdered since the 1980s. They gathered most of the data from newspaper articles online and from families themselves.

That’s when Harper made his next move.

Every time NWAC submitted funding proposals to Status of Women any reference to Sisters in Spirit was scratched out or came with a clear message – that program no longer existed once the funding ran out. The name couldn’t even be used, said Rexe.

NWAC was at crossroads. They had all this data – but was hitting another wall with the Harper government.

That’s when Rexe left.

She felt her name had become synonymous with NWAC and maybe it was doing more harm than good.

“I was really worried I was going to become a hindrance to NWAC and Sisters in Spirit in moving forward if my name was attached to funding proposals,” she said, adding she was the ninth executive director of the program to leave since it began in 2005 – most due to stress.

The pain of working with families and trying to help them only to be thwarted by the Harper government became too much for many at NWAC said Rexe.

EVIDENCE TO ACTION – \$1.89 million

With funding for Sisters in Spirit coming to an end, NWAC had to come up with a different program, and they did. It was called Evidence to Action. The new three-year project would receive \$1.89 million in funding from Status of Women beginning in February 2011. One of the conditions of this new money was that NWAC could no longer conduct any research into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Despite strict rules prohibiting research, APTN was told NWAC quietly kept updating its database. A volunteer was pulling names from media articles.



Michele Audette, former president of NWAC

Michele Audette began her term as the outspoken president of NWAC during this time and almost immediately the RCMP came to her looking to access the database, which they hadn't shared with anyone always citing privacy.

It wasn't the first time the RCMP had tried to peek inside the database.

Mounties had been working on a memorandum of understanding with previous president Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, who replaced Jacobs, but the board didn't want her to share the database said Audette.

"That first week, August 2012, the RCMP asked me if we could work together on the MOU. I said 'No. I'll be here for the next few years and we should go further than the database,'" said Audette.

A few months passed and the RCMP national headquarter's spokeswoman Cpl. Julie Gagnon went public in February 2013 and "discredited" NWAC's numbers of MMIW by saying the RCMP only knew of a few dozen names of MMIW said Audette.

"Then boom. There that's that Julie," said Audette. "Whacking NWAC's work and credibility."

The concerning part, for NWAC and Rexe, was the RCMP wasn't being completely honest.

The way Rexe explains it is she went to the RCMP in early 2010 with the 118 names of women they weren't sure were Aboriginal and asked if the Mounties would confirm.

They came back with 64 confirmed cases of Indigenous women but they knew it was only a portion of NWAC's database.

"I was furious," said Rexe. "I thought you have completely taken that out of context."

Audette was furious, too.

But, instead of fighting in the media, she “extended a hand” to Supt. Tyler Bates, who was then running the RCMP’s Aboriginal policing unit.

They spoke a couple times on the phone, she said, and Bates offered to write every police force in Canada asking for their statistics on MMIW.

From that point on NWAC and the RCMP had a working relationship, but Audette still wouldn’t hand over the database.

Over the next year they would meet and discuss how the RCMP’s project into tallying the number of MMIW from 1982 to 2012 was going. Each time, the RCMP would inquire about the database, according to Audette and other sources.

On Feb. 20, 2014, NWAC met with the RCMP again. Bates was supposed to be at the meeting but was called away.

Other members of the RCMP at that meeting told NWAC they were 98 per cent done, the number of MMIW was over 1,000 and they just needed NWAC’s database to wrap it up.

That’s when NWAC provided the database, but none of the personal statements from family members of victims, said Audette.

APTN reported on April 30, 2014 that the number [was over 1,000](#) and was supposed to be released on March 31 but the report’s release was being stalled by Public Safety Canada.

APTN spoke to Bates before publishing and he said the report would come out “down the road.” About two weeks later the RCMP’s report was released in Winnipeg, away from the Ottawa spotlight, and Public Safety refused to answer questions on whether they stalled its release for March 31. The project [found 1,181 MMIW](#) cases between 1982 and 2012 with the help of every police force across the country pulling files.

The RCMP denied any interference by Public Safety.

“I was shocked that they did release the report because it was putting a bad reputation on the Conservative government,” said Audette. “Was it something that leaked and they no choice but to release it? I think we have an angel on our side.”

The March 31 date is potentially important because on March 6 the government released its parliamentary report on violence against Aboriginal women. That report consisted of months of testimony from experts, families and government officials.

A draft report of that committee’s findings called for a national inquiry into MMIW but when the final version was released that recommendation was nowhere to be found.

It was reported first by CBC that the Prime Minister's Office had removed it, as the Conservative Party represented the majority of MP's sitting on the committee.

The RCMP report renewed calls for a national inquiry across the country but Harper, again, refused to call one saying the time for more studies was over and the issue needed action.

APTN sought comment from the Prime Minister's Office on this story but never received a response.

PROJECT PEACE – \$750,000

Funding for NWAC's Evidence to Action was scheduled to run out April 30, 2014, but the organization had been trying to secure funding for a new project in the months prior.

NWAC submitted a funding proposal for Project Peace in November 2013 but didn't get anywhere. In February 2014, while working with the RCMP, staff at NWAC met with staff at Status of Women to talk money.

They said part of the project would revive the Sisters in Spirit database.

But when this was mentioned to Leitch's staff they were against it, said Audette.

"We spoke to Minister Leitch a few weeks ago ... (and) her staff was saying no to us on missing and murdered. They wanted us to do something else. But during the meeting she said she was the one to make the decision," Audette said [March 26, 2014](#).

Funding never came by the end of Evidence to Action and NWAC had to lay off staff.

By Sept. 30, 2014, the money still hadn't come.

Audette and her staff met with Leitch, again, on Sept. 30 pressing the government to fund a scaled down version of Project Peace, after all, the government had announced a \$25 million "[Action Plan](#)" to help end violence against Aboriginal women.

It didn't go well, according to Audette.

Audette was running to be a member of the Liberal party in her home riding in the upcoming federal election and informed Leitch of this.

"She got mad. She asked me to go outside of the room. She tried to kick me out," said Audette, who refused. "The media are wondering what is going on with the funding, so what do I say if I go outside?"

That's when things apparently got heated.

“Are you threatening me?” Leitch said, according to Audette. “‘Get out. Get out.’ She was yelling. I was shocked and said ‘no, I’m not going to get out.’”

Leitch’s office denies there was a heated argument.

“No such heated argument took place,” said spokesperson Andrew McGrath. “I was told this did not happen.”

Project Peace was funded, but for \$750,000, which was a fraction of what NWAC was appealing for. On its website, NWAC describes the project as an initiative to [“promote safety, violence prevention and solution based approaches”](#) for Aboriginal women and girls.

Dwindling staff at NWAC feel the government has almost succeeded in ‘silencing us.’

According to people APTN spoke to, they’re afraid to speak out and are praying for the Conservative government to be overthrown in the Oct. 19 election.

“We jump through every hoop and bust our asses,” said a source inside NWAC. “There’s restrictions on what we can do. It’s always a shrinking budget. It’s always less than last year.”

Many have moved on.

Lewis works for the Brantford Native Housing Corporation. Jacobs is working on furthering her education and continues to speak for MMIW families. Audette was unsuccessful in her original nominated bid, but recently was appointed the candidate in another Quebec riding under the Liberal banner.

As for Rexe, she wears the guilt of a person who feels they didn’t do enough like a wet shirt. Five years later she gets emotional when thinking about all the families she tried to help.

“In many ways, I feel as though I failed many of the families when the (Sisters In Spirit) funding didn’t continue,” she said. “I really do feel like the Conservative government felt like we were gaining too much momentum and they were doing everything they could to shut us down.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/09/09/stephen-harpers-longest-war-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Native American Rodeo Breaks With DC Football Team's Charity Over 'Racial Slur' Name

The Indian National Finals Rodeo is the latest organization to reject money from the Washington team's charitable arm.

[Travis Waldron](#) Sports Reporter, The Huffington Post

Posted: 09/04/2015 05:29 PM EDT | Edited: 09/04/2015 05:35 PM EDT

A Montana-based Native American rodeo competition has severed ties with the Washington Redskins Original Americans Foundation, the controversial charitable organization backed by Washington's NFL franchise, because of the team's continued use of a nickname the rodeo's organizers consider a "racial slur."

The Indian National Finals Rodeo, which says it is the U.S.' and Canada's largest rodeo organization for Native Americans, is the latest of a number of groups that have rejected or returned donations from the foundation. OAF has drawn the ire of many Native American organizations since it launched last year.

The rodeo, which accepted a \$200,000 donation from the charity last year, notified OAF of its decision in a Sept. 1 letter obtained by The Huffington Post. INFR Vice President Michael Bo Vocu, who signed the letter, confirmed its authenticity in a phone call Friday.

"After much soul searching, we have decided that we cannot in good conscience accept resources from you on the terms you have offered, no matter how desperately we need it," Vocu wrote in the letter. "That is because, as you know, the resources you are offering are not truly philanthropic -- they come with the expectation that we will support the racial slur that continues to promote your associated professional football team's name."

"That expectation is explicit: the organization offering the resources, the Washington R*dskins [sic] Original Americans Foundation, was deliberately named to invoke this slur and to ultimately make legitimizing that slur the consequence of accepting the foundation's support," Vocu continued.

Daniel Snyder, the Washington team's owner, launched OAF in 2014 amid widespread criticism of the team's name. The foundation sought to fund projects in Native American tribes and communities in an effort to "tackle the troubling realities facing so many tribes across our country," Snyder wrote in a letter announcing OAF's formation.

However, many Native American activists [blasted the move](#) as an attempt to buy the silence of the name's opponents.

INFR decided to take money from the foundation a year ago in order to meet its annual budget, but the decision was met with news stories describing the rodeo's "[embrace](#)" of the team's name. Many tribes and Native American organizations also refused the foundation's money.

The donation caused division among INFR's members, fans and contestants, Vocu told HuffPost on Friday, particularly after the [foundation's logo](#) -- which includes the Washington team's primary logo -- was featured prominently at rodeo events that OAF sponsored.

"The use of the logo left an uneasy feeling" among the organization's members, Vocu said.

INFR board members met with OAF members in August to discuss their concerns about the logo, but Vocu said reducing the prominence of the Washington team's emblem "didn't sound like something they wanted to do. It wasn't the response we wanted."

Vocu said INFR's board later discussed the issue and voted unanimously to sever the partnership. He maintained that the rodeo was "deeply appreciative" of the foundation's contribution, and says he believes OAF sincerely wants to help Native American communities. But, he added, the group's decision was rooted in opposition to the name and the discord caused by associating with the foundation.

The foundation has "sown division when we are in desperate need of unity," the letter states.

The South Dakota-based Cheyenne Sioux tribe last month [returned](#) a \$25,000 contribution from OAF. Last year, professional golfer Notah Begay III, who is Navajo, Isleta Pueblo and San Felipe Pueblo, [ended his association](#) with a charitable golf tournament when he discovered OAF was a co-sponsor. Other tribes have [rejected](#) donations as well.

Washington's team name has remained controversial since the foundation launched, and it has drawn the ire of Native American leaders and politicians across the country. Snyder, however, has said that he would "never" change the name, which he [sees](#) as a term of "honor," "pride" and "respect."

Neither OAF nor the Washington team immediately responded to a request for comment.

In his letter, Vocu said INFR could still accept money from the foundation, under one condition.

"If you are still interested in supporting our event in the name of your publicly expressed support for Indian Country," the letter says, "then we would plan to use some of the funds you make available to help educate the public about the history of the R-word, why it is so offensive and harmful to Native Americans and the need to eradicate it from today's vocabulary."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/native-american-rodeo-cuts-ties-with-redskins-backed-charity-over-racial-slur-name_55ea039de4b093be51bb92d8

Catholic Church to Revamp It's Teachings of the Native American Mission Experience

With the California Mission's founder about to be named a saint, the church plans to be more sensitive to the heartache natives suffered.

By [Paige Austin \(Patch Staff\)](#) September 6, 2015



With the pope expected to canonize Father Junipero Serra, who founded California's first nine missions, the Catholic Church has announced plans to address the Native American experience with more sensitivity and truthfulness.

A Los Angeles bishop will oversee a review of third- and fourth-grade Catholic school curriculum to ensure it better reflects a contemporary understanding of Native American history, it was announced. Along with the curriculum review, church officials will review displays, signage and training materials used to train docents and guides at the state's missions.

Bishop Edward Clark, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and a long-time liaison with the state's Indian communities, will lead the 18- month review, which

will include an examination of the cultural content at California missions under church authority.

The review will aim for culturally-sensitive and historically accurate enhancements to grade-school portrayals of Indian life, as well as to traditional teaching on the missions themselves, according to the California Catholic Conference. “The mission era gave rise to modern California, but it also gave rise to controversy and to heartache when seen through the eyes of the First Californians,” said Sacramento Bishop Jaime Soto, president of the California Catholic Conference.

“For many years, the Indian experience has been ignored or denied, replaced by an incomplete version of history focused more on European colonists than on the original Californians,” he said.

The announcement comes on the eve of the canonization of Father Junipero Serra, the 18th century Franciscan priest who helped convert thousands of native Californians to Christianity.

More from Eagle Rock Patch

Pope Francis is expected to canonize Father Serra on Sept. 23 during his visit to Washington, D.C.

“Today, on the verge of Father Serra’s canonization, the time has come to confront that incomplete history and to work with Native American educators, respected historians, Catholic school officials and others to change that and to reflect the best scholarship we can about that era,” said Ken Laverone, provincial vicar of the Franciscan Province of Santa Barbara, a partner in the educational effort.

Soto said the initiative will also advise on ways to make the missions relevant for tribal members.

“By definition, reconciliation isn’t just about the past, it’s also about the future,” the bishop said. “And the future of California’s missions won’t be complete until tribal members feel welcomed and included in mission life today.”

Direct Link: <http://patch.com/california/eaglerock/catholic-church-revamp-its-teachings-native-american-mission-experience>

Bernie Sanders visits Native American settlement in Iowa

[Jason Noble](#), jnoble2@dmreg.com 8:22 p.m. CDT September 4, 2015



MESKWAKI SETTLEMENT, Ia. – Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders made a rare stop at this central-Iowa Native American settlement on Friday, and won an enthusiastic response to his liberal populism.

Sanders, an independent U.S. senator from Vermont seeking the Democratic nomination, hit his regular talking points on addressing income inequality, enacting universal health care, making public higher education free for students and reforming campaign finance.

But he also addressed Native American concerns directly, invoking tribal respect for the land in his call for action on climate change and answering questions on the federal-tribal relations.

“Native American people, perhaps more than any other people in our country, have always known the relationship and the importance of treating nature with respect,” Sanders said, to rising applause from a crowd roughly evenly divided between white and Native American attendees.

He went on, “Native Americans forever have understood that we gain sustenance, we gain life from nature. You destroy nature, you destroy life and that is what we’re doing globally right now and that has got to change.”

In response to a question on the relationship between the government and Native American tribes, Sanders called for federal action to address economic, education and health care issues on reservations and other tribal lands – but with local autonomy.

“The federal government, the U.S government’s relationship to Native Americans has been a disaster from day one,” he said, adding, “Everything else being equal, we want decisions being made by the peoples themselves, not dictated by the government. There has to be a relationship, but at the end of the day I would like to see local decisions being made by local people themselves.

Lavern Jefferson, a member of the Meskwaki tribal council, noted that Sanders’ campaign reached out to the tribe about holding an event at the settlement, not the other way around.

“He wanted to come out here and talk to us. He wasn’t asked,” Jefferson said.

Sanders’ visit marks the first appearance by a presidential candidate at the settlement since former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson campaigned here ahead of the 2008 caucuses, Jefferson said. Prior to that, a candidate hadn’t visited since Walter Mondale in the early 1980s.

After Sanders spoke, Jefferson said he appreciated the candidates’ blunt talk about income inequality and corporate power – and his answer on tribal relations with government.

“Being able to make their own decisions and govern themselves is what’s really important to all the tribes across the U.S.,” he said.

Priscilla Wanatee, a settlement resident who teaches the Meskwaki language to high school students, said Sanders’ willingness to visit could win him votes.

“The people will be more apt to maybe vote for him if he’s willing to come out and meet the people,” she said

The settlement, situated just west of Toledo and Tama in eastern Iowa, is home to about 900 members of the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa. The tribe owns about 8,000 acres of land in the area and operates the nearby Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel.

SETTING: A gymnasium at a Meskwaki Nation community center near Tama.

CROWD: More than 250, including many young people and several members of the Meskwaki High School Warriors football team, who sat in the front row wearing their jerseys before a game later on Friday evening.

REACTION: Sanders won cheers and applause frequently throughout his 35-minute speech and in response to several of his answers in a Q-and-A session.

WHAT’S NEXT: After the Meskwaki Nation event, Sanders walked in a labor picket with employees of Penford Products in Cedar Rapids and then held an outdoor “town meeting” on the campus of Coe College that drew hundreds despite the 90-degree heat. On Saturday, he’s scheduled to attend an AFSCME labor union meeting in Altoona. For

details on all the candidates' appearances in Iowa, visit DesMoinesRegister.com/candidatetracker.

Direct Link:

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2015/09/04/b-ernie-sanders-iowa-meskwaki-cedar-rapids/71599838/>

Beyond Denali: Restoring Native American names

By: CNN Wire, *Sep 07, 2015 8:28 AM MST Updated: Sep 07, 2015 12:56 PM MST*



Mount Denali in Alaska (Ken Conger/NPS Photo)

There's power in naming.

In some cases, streets, cities, natural wonders and even countries are renamed by the winning side of a battle or war.

Often times, it's the surveyors coming after the battles that have been fought, mapping "unexplored" regions and making these places their namesake or giving the honor to politicians in power just because they can.

Which explains why Denali, the Alaskan mountain that is the tallest U.S. peak, had been called McKinley since 1896, before William McKinley even won his Republican bid for president. That is, until U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell restored the mountain to Denali, an Athabascan (Native Alaskan) name for "great one" on August 30.

Denali and other natural wonders that have stood on the North American continent for millennia were named for European explorers, American presidents and others, even though they had been named by Native American nations thousands of years earlier.

Sometimes colonists or U.S. citizens renaming these natural wonders chose to respect enshrined Native American names. Maine's Mount Katahdin, the northernmost point of the Appalachian Trail, was named the "Greatest Mountain" by the Penobscot Indians and retains that name.

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Georgia retains the Native American word "Chattahoochee," which the National Park Service says is "thought to mean 'River of Painted Rocks.' "

Several state names are Native American in origin. The names of Massachusetts and Minnesota come from the language of the Massachusetts-area Algonquian Indians and the Dakota Sioux name for sky-tinted water, respectively.

But many natural wonders still retain names chosen by people who came after the Native Americans. And there's a loss of history when those traditional names are replaced, according to some experts.

"For traditional societies, place names were typically associated with histories and stories and mnemonic devices to aid those societies to find knowledge about anything, such as our environment or who we are as a society," said Jay Johnson, a University of Kansas associate professor of geography, whose research focuses on indigenous peoples' cultural survival.

When other people come in and change the names, "there's certain loss of knowledge," said Johnson. "The restoration of traditional place names is an acknowledgment of traditional society, an acknowledgment of their knowledge of the landscape and their history."

Some Native Americans connected to land refuse to give up the fight to restore those names or find other Native names that fit, and they are increasingly joined by non-Native allies.

They often petition their state board on geographic names and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, a federal interagency board that standardizes geographic names. The board has not been directed to restore Native American names of places, although the board's Domestic Names Committee does consult with tribes on name proposals.

"It's not the board's mission to restore historical names," says Louis Yost, the federal board's executive secretary and a staffer at the U.S. Geological Survey. "It tends to go along with local use and preference. In (the) case of Denali, that's how everyone up there, the locals, Native or not, refer to the local features."

That was the case for Alaska's Black River, which Yost said was restored in 2014 to its Gwich'in name, Draanjik River. The reinstated name translates to "caches along the river."

Another is Hawadax Island, part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which had previously been named Rat Island. The island had been overrun by rats hundreds of years ago and its ecology destroyed after a Japanese vessel shipwrecked there.

The Nature Conservancy worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Island Conservation to remove the rats and restore the island's ecology to make it habitable for birds again, said Rand Hagenstein, the Nature Conservancy's Alaska director. The group's Native Aleut partners helped restore the name, which the U.S. Board of Geographic Names made official in 2012.

The English name given to the island reminds people of what Hagenstein calls the ecological insult. Restoring the island's ecology and giving it a native name got rid of "the ecological insult and name insult and put back appropriate names from first peoples of Alaska," he said.

More change may be on the way.

A spiritual leader from the Lakota Nation in Wyoming has petitioned the federal government to change the name of Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming to Bear Lodge National Monument. "Bear Lodge" is the English translation of an early name for the site, which researchers speculate was misinterpreted as "Bad Gods," followed by "Devils Tower."

However, there's division among locals about the need to rename the monument. Local and state politicians have said it would be expensive to rename a popular tourist destination and that the proposed name would cause confusion with other spots named "Bear Lodge."

A proposal to rename South Dakota's Harney Peak with "Hinhan Kaga (Making of Owls)" failed at the state level. The South Dakota Board on Geographic Names voted to retain the name "Harney Peak," citing a lack of consensus within the state on a replacement name.

Another proposal to change "Harney Peak" to "Black Elk Peak" is still before the national board. But it may not succeed in the face of opposition by the state board.

While there's lots of debate over renaming Mount Rainier in Washington state, the U.S. board has already rejected that idea, so it's not likely to come up again soon.

There's not much debate within Alaska over Denali.

In Alaska, non-Native Alaskans and Native Alaskans alike call the great mountain "Denali." The national park was named "Denali National Park and Reserve" in 1980, but even Republican U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski couldn't get legislation passed in Congress to change the mountain's name back to Denali. (Ohio's congressional delegation, McKinley's home state, opposed the move.)

"The name McKinley was a name bestowed on the mountain honoring someone who had never been here," said Hagenstein. "Sure, he was a fine leader but he had no connection with Alaska."

"Denali is the great one, and it's an impressive and imposing part of our landscape," he said. "It means a lot to have the original name associated with it. Anything we can do to maintain and deepen our connection to land is a good thing."

And whether people live in Alaska or Outside (as Alaskans put it, with a capital "O"), people benefit from a sense of time that stretches back before the first European explorers, Johnson said.

"For all Americans, it helps us to know our longer history," said Johnson. "While some people argue that McKinley has been the name for more than 100 years, Denali is a name that's been there for thousands of years. Isn't that longer history important to know for us to know as Americans?"

- By Katie Hetter, *The CNN Wire*™ & © 2015 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

Direct Link: <http://www.krtv.com/story/29973036/beyond-denali-restoring-native-american-names>

1,000 Years Ago, Caffeinated Drinks Had Native Americans Buzzing

September 08, 2015 12:44 PM ET
Murray Carpenter



Make mine a venti: An example of a drinking vessel from the Grasshopper Pueblo archaeological site in central Arizona. Researchers tested shards of similar vessels found at various sites in the American Southwest and found evidence that people in the region were drinking caffeinated cacao and yaupon holly drinks 1,000 years back.

Courtesy Patricia Crown

Feeding a caffeine habit is no sweat in our day and age: Just raid the office kitchen for some tea or hit one of the coffee shops that pepper the landscape.

But 1,000 years ago, Native Americans in the American Southwest and Mexican Northwest were getting their buzz on in landscapes where no obvious sources of caffeine grew, according to new findings published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#).

The research shows that people in the arid region — who had no nearby sources of caffeine — not only made drinks from cacao, the seed that is used to make chocolate, but also brewed drinks from the leaves and twigs of yaupon holly. That suggests that they had developed pretty extensive networks to trade caffeinated products between 750 and 1400 AD.

Patricia Crown, a professor of anthropology at the University of New Mexico, led a team that analyzed 177 pottery samples from 18 sites in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Chihuahua, Mexico. (During the analysis, scientists were not allowed to bring any caffeinated beverages into the lab, for fear of contamination). They found caffeine residue on pieces of jars, pitchers and mugs in 40 samples from 12 sites, and conclude that the groups "likely consumed stimulant drinks in communal, ritual gatherings."

Scientists have known that people in Mesoamerica — a region extending from modern-day central Mexico down through Central America — were [already drinking](#) frothy, caffeinated chocolate drinks some 3,000 years ago. And Crown's [earlier research](#) had found that cacao had made its way up to the Southwestern U.S. a thousand years back. But this is the first study to also find evidence of yaupon holly, a caffeinated, botanical cousin to [yerba mate](#), in this region a millennia ago. (As we've reported, tea aficionados are starting to [rediscover](#) the virtues of yaupon.)

Yaupon is a caffeinated plant native to the Southeast, where Native Americans brewed it into a drink used ceremonially, often in rituals that involved purging. (Thus, yaupon's Latin name, *Ilex vomitoria*, though it is not an emetic). Several years ago, Crown led a team that [found](#) traces of caffeine — from drinks made with yaupon holly — at a site of a mound city near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. That suggested that yaupon was already extensively traded in the Eastern side of what is now the U.S. 1,000 years ago.



Archaeologist Chip Wills records samples of vessel shards at the Shabik'eschee Village in Chaco Canyon for residue analysis. In the foreground is a scale measuring a shard used in the analysis.
Courtesy of Patricia Crown

The new research was sparked years ago, when Crown was looking at some unusual pottery in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. "The initial idea developed out of looking at Chacoan cylinder jars and trying to understand how they were being used," she says.

When she tested the jars for residues, she was surprised to find that the "analysis showed very clearly that they were being used to drink cacao-based drinks." That got her wondering just how far back in time, and how widespread, the cacao trade went.

"When does it start? How widespread is it? How late does it go?" Once she and her colleagues started asking those questions, she says, "it became clear that it wasn't just cacao, that there was something else there — that is, the holly-based drink. All of that has surprised me."

Janine Gasco, an anthropology professor at the California State University, Dominguez Hills, has studied the cacao trade extensively. She says the new findings confirm a growing body of knowledge.

"Any Mesoamerican archaeologist that works on that time period is well aware of that phenomenon: increased trade, increased long-distance trade in more and more products," she says. "It builds the argument even further that there was this vibrant trade going on."

One bit of the puzzle that's still not solved: Just where did that yaupon come from? It may be that Southeastern tribes traded the yaupon leaves with Southwestern tribes.

But there are also smaller, isolated patches of yaupon growing in Mesoamerica, and it is possible that yaupon came to the Southwest along the same trade routes that cacao traveled from the humid, tropical lowlands where it thrives. (Cacao was not the only Mesoamerican product imported to the Southwest: scarlet macaws, pyrite mirrors, and copper bells were also traded.) However, there's no historical evidence for the use of yaupon drinks in Mesoamerica.

Crown says wherever it came from, the presence of both yaupon and cacao fills in the picture of early caffeine use in the region.

"I think it points out how extensive the use of caffeinated plants for drinks was in North America," says Crown, "and that more work needs to be done to try to figure out exactly where that was coming from."

As for her own caffeine preferences? Crown says she's partial to tea.

Direct Link: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/09/08/437580856/1-000-years-ago-caffeinated-drinks-had-native-americans-buzzing>

Court program assists Native Americans after DWI charges

Program leverages culture to spark change

Published 11:16 AM MDT Sep 07, 2015, By [Megan Cruz](#)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. —A renewed push to help Native Americans with alcoholism is running through the metropolitan courthouse in Albuquerque.

Metro court officials are breathing new life into an old program. The Urban Native American Drug Court once ran for about five years. It's similar to the existing DWI/Drug Court program, because it uses nine months of treatment and supervision instead of incarceration to deter alcoholism.

The Native American program has some key differences.

"The idea is to try to incorporate some of the traditional beliefs into healing and wellness," Judge Maria Dominguez said.

Right now, there are about 20 participants. To qualify, each must be Native American and have been convicted of more than two DWIs.

Officials said the biggest challenge is a fear of losing their spirituality. David Lente provides the therapeutic component of the program by integrating activities cultural activities, like talking circles and community service projects.

The hope is to reconnect them with the positive aspects of their culture.

Court officials said drug court, as a whole, is a much more effective tool than jail time. They said only 6 percent of those who participate end up getting arrested again for drunken driving.

Direct Link: <http://www.koat.com/news/court-program-assists-native-americans-after-dwi-charges/35143168>

History Professor Denies Native Genocide: Native Student Disagreed, Then Says Professor Expelled Her From Course

[Vincent Schilling](#)

9/6/15

A Cal State Sacramento University professor who allegedly told his United States History class he did not like the term 'genocide' in relation to Native Americans in history, told a Native American student who disagreed with him that she was disenrolled and expelled from his course.

UPDATE: The Sacramento State History Department has issued a tweet stating Johnson was not expelled from the course. You can read the article update here: [Sac State History Dept Tweets - "Student Not Disenrolled."](#)

The account is according to Native university student, Chiitaanibah Johnson (Navajo/Maidu) a 19-year-old sophomore student at Cal State Sacramento University.

Johnson says when she told her U.S. History Professor Maury Wiseman that she disagreed with his assessment that Native Americans did not face genocide, the professor said she was hijacking his class, and that she was accusing him of bigotry and racism.

The professor then dismissed the class early, apologized for Johnson's disruptions and told her she was disenrolled at the end of the class on Friday.

"The whole thing started on Wednesday," Johnson told ICTMN. "He was talking about Native America and he said the word genocide. He paused and said 'I don't like to use that word because I think it is too strong for what happened' and 'genocide implies that it was on purpose and most native people were wiped out by European diseases.'"

Johnson, who was offended, did not at first respond to the professor's comments.

"I wrote it down. I was enraged for what I felt were obvious reasons. I didn't say anything [on Wednesday] because I knew that if I didn't have anything specific to back it up in terms of tangible or solid evidence that he would not take my comments into consideration," she said.

On Friday, Johnson presented her research to the professor after his discussion on the Iroquois Confederacy and the Portuguese expeditions.

“He made it a point to say indigenous people were not peaceful. I was upset for obvious reasons. He'd mentioned how the French and the Dutch were allies and made it a point to say native people were killing each other before white settlers arrived.”

Johnson says that she understands that there were native conflicts before settlers arrived, but when the professor talked about the bravery of Portuguese expeditions without emphasis on the slave trade she again grew upset.

“On Friday, I raised my hand and I said, ‘I understand why we're talking about the Portuguese people because it explains how they got to America. But I do not think it is fair to talk about Portuguese people as if they were only poor and brave. They became rich by raping and enslaving the indigenous lands and people that they "discovered,"' says Johnson.

Johnson says that when she asked why the professor did not talk about any sort of Iroquoian technological advances or spirituality and then asked about her professor's stance on genocide, the professor grew volatile and rolled his eyes several times.

“I told him, ‘You said genocide implies the purposeful extermination of people and that they were mostly wiped out by European diseases.’ I said, ‘That is not a true statement.’

“He said, ‘Genocide is not what happened.’ I stood up and started reading from an article by the United Nations that said: ‘Genocide is the deliberate killing of another people, a sterilization of people and/or a kidnapping of their children,’ and he said, ‘That is enough.’

“I said, ‘No. You have to tell the truth.’

“He said, ‘If you want to come talk to me after class, now is not the time, you are hijacking my class.’”

After a bit more discussion which Johnson says became heated, the professor dismissed the class. Additionally, other students defended the professor.

“He said, ‘You know what class? I am so sorry to everybody that this is happening. Please everyone come back on Wednesday have a good weekend.’”

After the class was dismissed, Johnson said she was expelled from the course by her professor.

“He said, ‘I do not appreciate this in my classroom.’ He began shaking his finger at me and said, ‘I don't appreciate you making me sound like a racist and a bigot in my classroom. You have hijacked my lesson, taken everything out of context and I don't care what kind of scholarship you have, or what kind of affiliation you have with the university, you will be disenrolled and expelled from this classroom.’”

“Within 10 minutes of me asking these questions and trying to read pieces from the article, he shut me down. He wasn't listening. He excused everyone out of the room and told me I was expelled from the class,” says Johnson.

Since being told she was expelled from the course on Friday, Johnson says she feels overwhelmed by the close-mindedness and injustice of her situation. She also was disappointed that no students came to her defense.

“I had zero support from anybody in the classroom,” says Johnson. “All of the research I had done was very traumatizing - to read about babies being slammed into rocks being held from their ankles, to hear of people being lit on fire while they were still alive, to hear of them being disemboweled, and having their arms and hands chopped off.”

“I know these things are true. I have been told about them personally from my great-grand parents and grandparents and my mother who was in boarding school.”

“To be kicked out of the classroom so quickly, I was floored and I thought, 'Are you kidding me? This was the third day of class, and already you're going to completely expel me?' I didn't call him names, I did not say he was racist, I did not use foul language - yes, I raised my voice because he raised his voice at me and was talking over me and wouldn't let me say anything. I felt like I had my feet completely kicked out from under me. I felt like I approached the situation in a way that a student of the university level is supposed to approach a disagreement with the professor.”

“I have been dealing with this kind of racism since I was a little girl,” says Johnson.

The Johnson family has told ICTMN that their next step in this matter is for their daughter to write a respectful letter to the university History Department chair as well as to the head of the University in an attempt to reach an amicable resolution.

Since Friday, ICTMN has reached out to the University of Sacramento about the incident, their Provost of the University has responded and expressed they will be investigating this matter. The professor has not responded to our phone or email requests for comment.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/09/06/history-professor-denies-native-genocide-native-student-disagrees-gets-expelled-course>

New AP US History Exam Perpetuates Lies About Native Americans

[Tanya H. Lee](#)

9/8/15

American exceptionalism is back.

The College Board, having deleted the term in its highly-controversial 2014 revision of the AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework, has reinstated it in the [2015 revision](#), which came out at the end of July.

Three American Indian history scholars reviewed the curriculum in detail at ICTMN's request.

Shannon Speed, Chickasaw, director of Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Texas Austin, defines American exceptionalism. "What it means is the notion that America is an exceptional country, the greatest country in the world, founded on laudable principles, and that while there were minor things like genocide and slavery, really in the end we should all rally around our identity as Americans because those things were asides in this big narrative of American history."

The term, says James Riding In, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, is "an attempt to distort history and to place white Americans above reproach, condemnation and culpability." Riding In is associate professor of American Indian Studies at Arizona State University.

The treatment of American Indians in the narrative of U.S. history is an issue that K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Mvskoke/Creek Nation, professor of Justice and Social Inquiry, and Distinguished Scholar in Indigenous Education at Arizona State University's Center for Indian Education, also finds troubling. She cites this statement in the curriculum: "Latino, American Indian, and Asian American movements continued to demand social and economic equality and redress of past injustices."

Lomawaima says, "No, no, no. These are not equivalent categories. [These groups] have very different goals in mind. [This statement is] once again erasing indigenous sovereignty and sliding American Indians in as just another piece of the so-called racial-ethnic mix. That's part of the whole impulse to erase, eliminate the Native, because that gets rid of the problem, which is—this nation was founded on the illegal acquisition of Native lands."

Juliana Barr, an associate professor of history at Duke University who worked on the 2015 revision, agrees, explaining that "each of those groups has completely different issues that they are negotiating with the U.S. government."

Treatment of the sovereign status of American Indian nations is an area that drew a lot of criticism. Riding In comments, "The way the curriculum is written says Indians are just like other groups wanting a piece of the American pie. That is not the case, because Indians have been able to conserve our sovereignty by maintaining a degree of separation from dominant society.... We are not a minority group. We are distinct peoples with a highly defined political relationship with the U.S. government."

There are underlying problems with the overall approach of the curriculum, says Lomawaima. Throughout most of the document, she notes, the taking of Indian lands is presented as a natural outcome of the movement of different groups of people across the country. But, she says, terms like “seizure of their [American Indians’] lands,” suggest a more accurate understanding of American Indian-settler interactions.

Speed comments on another problem, how the curriculum treats what was essentially the enslavement of Native peoples, noting that a description of the *encomienda* system is preceded by this statement, “Spanish exploration and the conquest of the Americas were accompanied and furthered by widespread deadly epidemics that devastated Native populations....”

Speed says, “This is true, but what happens with the [order in which the points are] presented is a lot of students come away with the idea that the depopulation of the American continent was largely accidental—it happened because Europeans brought germs with them and they didn’t know everybody was going to get sick and die. Certainly many people did die of European diseases. But that is only a part of what happened and a large part of what happened, besides open warfare, which was significant, was forced labor, which killed lots of people.”

Feedback on the 2014 version included sharp criticism that the exam was not sufficiently patriotic and did not present American history in a sufficiently positive light. Riding In notes that in the curriculum framework, there is almost no mention of American Indians after 1898. “It’s as if Indians just vanished,” he says.

A straightforward example of crossed communications—a lack of consensus between the authors of the curriculum and the Native American history professors ICTMN consulted about what to say and how to say it—is this: The College Board wrote, “In the *encomienda* system, Spanish colonial economies marshaled Native American labor to support plantation-based agriculture and extract precious metals and other resources.” The American Indian historians whom ICTMN consulted suggested that the word “marshaled” could be understood as referring to a way of organizing workers, glossing over the fact that the *encomienda* system was a system of forced labor.

But what the College Board meant, says Barr, is something quite different. “We purposely used the word ‘marshal’ because it speaks to military order and coercion; that word was chosen consciously.”

For work so important—and so fraught with centuries of conquest, oppression and prejudice—a more representative group of scholars might have produced a less problematic document where intent and execution were more aligned.

As Lomawaima notes, “[The curriculum] doesn’t say to celebrate American exceptionalism. It just includes it as a topic. I couldn’t find anything in the language here that would mandate one way or another either celebrating or critiquing American exceptionalism. It just puts it into the mix as a component of the character or the

conversations about this nation. And I think in that respect it's correct. It has been a powerful ideology. It continues to be a powerful ideology."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/09/08/new-ap-us-history-exam-perpetuates-lies-about-native-americans-161628>

One woman's mission to photograph every Native American tribe in the US

Matika Wilbur has traveled more than 250,000 miles to ensure stereotyped images are replaced with accurate ones to change history's collective psyche



Robert and Fannie Mitchell. Tribal affiliation: Dine Photograph: Matika Wilbur for the Guardian

Hilal Isler

Monday 7 September 2015 13.00 BST Last modified on Tuesday 8 September 2015 00.00 BST

Three years ago, [Matika Wilbur](#) sold almost everything she owned, left behind her apartment in Seattle, and set out on the open road. The former high school teacher had one goal: to photograph members of each federally recognized Native American tribe in the United States.

Wilbur's photographs are mostly black and white. She shoots on a Canon EOS 7D digital, and a Mamiya film camera. When she finishes [Project 562](#) (named for the number of federally recognized tribes at the time Wilbur began her work), she plans to compile the photographs and share them with the public through various publications, exhibitions and curricular material.

To date, the 31-year-old has driven more than 250,000 miles and has nearly completed her journey. She will finish her tour at the end of the month in the northeastern US. Wilbur has taken thousands of pictures so far. She has met with a range of people that

include PhDs, lawyers, tribal elders, designers, grandmothers and artists. But sometimes she worries it isn't enough.



Darkfeather, Bibiana and Eckos Ancheta from the Tulalip Tribe Photograph: Matika Wilbur for the Guardian

A search for [Native Americans](#) on the internet yields almost nothing but reductionist, 18th-century representations of a “feathered and leathered people”, Wilbur says. She hopes the pictures she’s taking can someday replace the stereotyped, dated ones found in internet searches, and the ones we hold on to in our collective psyche.

“I’m ultimately doing this because our perception matters,” she says. “Our perception fuels racism. It fuels segregation. Our perception determines the way we treat each other.”



Steven Yellowtail, tribal affiliation: Crow Nation Photograph: Makita Wilbur for the Guardian

Wilbur’s journey to this work has been long and winding. She calls it a journey of “self-actualization”. After earning a degree in photography from the Brooks Institute, Wilbur moved to Los Angeles, to become a fashion photographer, but says she soon grew disenchanted with the excess and frivolity of the entertainment industry.

She eventually traveled to South America, where she began photographing indigenous people. One night, in the mountains below Machu Pichu, she dreamt of her late grandmother. Her grandmother told her it was time to return home; to bring the lens to

her own people. Several years and two Kickstarter fundraisers later, Project 562 was born.



Makita Wilbur has traveled more than 250,000 miles to capture the the depth of Native Americans
Photograph: Matika Wilbur for the Guardian

These days, Wilbur is on the east coast, traveling through Haudonesonee land. On the road, she is often alone. She admits to being exhausted. Wilbur has interns but says they don't last very long. "After two or three weeks, they start saying, 'Hey, I really need to go home,'" she says. Still, Wilbur persists, sleeping where she can, on couches, and in her "big girl", (her nickname for her RV). Sometimes, she'll sleep on the floor of a stranger's home. She has spent many nights on reservations in the most remote parts of the country.

But the physical exhaustion is often less difficult to bear than the emotional weight of the stories she has heard. Wilbur speaks with passion and distress about the young Native Americans who are growing up on the reservation today. "What happens when a people have lost their sense of connection to the land, to their spirit, and to the things that make them whole?" she says. "They look around, and wonder about the future. And they turn to things that fill those holes inside of them." Things like drugs and alcohol.



Chief Bill James, Tribal Affiliation: Lummi Nation Photograph: Matika Wilbur for the Guardian

Wilbur has personal experience with addiction and has dealt with substance abuse in her own family. She says she has recently celebrated "14 years on the red road", a Native

American term that refers to complete abstinence from drugs and alcohol in an effort to find cultural and spiritual wellness. She recalls too, her former students' battles with substance abuse.

"Over the years, I've lost several students to drug addiction and suicide," she recalls. "Some of our students see this and say: 'is this what it must mean to be an Indian?'"

Today, Native Americans comprise a little under 2% of the US population or, according to the latest Census data, about 5.2 million people. And "three out of four of our women today have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault," Wilbur adds.



Bahazhoni Tso Tribal Affiliation: Navajo Nation Photograph: Matika Wilbur for the Guardian

Despite this, Wilbur is committed to excavating stories of hope, not despair from Indian Country. "I want to be able to go home, and share stories of resiliency from across the Nation. I want our children to know about all of the strong advocates- the weavers, language holders, canoe builders, song keepers, medicine people, tribal leaders, elders, and so many more who are dedicated to protecting our ancestral life-ways so that they can grow up strong citizens of their Tribal Nation" she says.

And so, her gaze is fixed firmly on the horizon, on tomorrow, on moving beyond the past, in every sense. "Our goal as people has always been to be of one mind, one heart, and one spirit," she says.

For more information on Wilbur's traveling exhibit, visit [Project 562](#) or browse through her Instagram ([@matikawilbur](#)) feed.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/sep/07/native-american-photographs-matika-wilbur-project-562>

Red Wolf, Marvel's first Native American hero, is getting his own comic book



Red Wolf is getting his own book in December.

LOS ANGELES — When Marvel resets its entire publishing line later this year for its "All new, all different" initiative, the world of comic books will get a [strong shot of diversity](#), the scope of which is still coming to light.

Red Wolf, welcome to the party.

Marvel's first and primary Native American character is getting his own book starting in December, *Mashable* can exclusively reveal. Native Americans have a long history in the comic books, but Red Wolf — who's returned to the fray this year in its current alt-universe Western-themed "1872" run — hasn't had his own series since 1976.

The signs that this was coming were there; when Marvel announced its reboot, Red Wolf was right there in the teaser art (below, bottom right corner):



Marvel's all-new, all-different line.

Red Wolf was introduced in 1970 as William Talltrees in *Avengers* #80, and was the star of his own nine-issue series that started in 1972 with stories set in the Old West. The new Red Wolf will reside in the American Southwest, where his more grounded powers — think of him as being to New Mexico what Daredevil is to Hell's Kitchen — will be put to the test against some very gnarly criminal elements in what's being described as a "gritty, brutal crime series."

"We don't have a lot of characters who appear in the Southwest," said Jake Thomas, who's editing "Red Wolf." Though he'll be connected to the Marvel world at large, "He's going to be a little bit of a man apart out there."

The creative team includes writer Nathan Edmondson and artist Jeffrey Veregge, a member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe based out of Kingston, Washington, who's also of Suquamish and Duwamish decent. Veregge is doing covers, design and consulting; the artist on the book is Dalibor Talajić

"There's not a character like Red Wolf out there right now," Veregge told *Mashable*. "As a native, I'm really excited to see that he can do things, he can figure out things and stand with Captain America, and hold his own in this universe. That's what's awesome about it: You have all these characters of different nationalities and ethnicities, but it's not all about their culture. It's about them being a hero."

Though there have been various iterations of Red Wolf over the decades, this character will have his own origins, backstory and powers. For instance, the Red Wolf of old had the power to communicate with wolves; whether that's the case remains to be seen with this new run.

Though there will be supernatural elements, "we've made him a little bit of a regular Joe. We're not too beholden to the Red Wolf of old — this is our take on that character," Edmondson said.

Though he'll be existing in the same primary Marvel universe as Spider-Man, Captain America and the other Avengers, Red Wolf will be from the same alternate universe as "1872," meaning he's not connected to any existing Native American tribe.

"Nobody should go to this looking as its historical," Edmondson said. "He comes from another dimension, after all. But it's very important for us to approach it in as authentic a way as possible. Jeffery offers this, and not just for consultation, but with his creative input — his covers jump out from 100 feet away."



Red Wolf is getting his own book in December.

"Above all, he's resourceful," Edmondson said. "He's kind of in a sense the Jason Bourne of the West, who can find a way out of any situation, or a way to use the resources of whatever room or position he may be in — he's not a gunslinger, but he might use a gun if he has to. ... But beyond all that, he's just a brawling, tough-as-nails fighter."

This post has been updated to correctly attribute quotes to Nathan Edmondson.

Direct Link: <http://mashable.com/2015/09/08/marvel-comics-red-wolf-native-american-superhero/>

Senator Harry Reid: Dan Snyder tried to 'bribe' some Native Americans

By Ryan Wilson | CBSSports.com
September 9, 2015 1:44 pm ET

Senator Minority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.) [has long opposed](#) the Redskins name, going so far as to say this spring that the team [will be called something else within three years](#). On Tuesday, Reid reiterated his position during an interview with CNN, and even suggested that Redskins owner Daniel Snyder had tried to bribe Native Americans from Reid's home state.

"Here's a recommendation I'll give to CNN: Don't use the word Washington 'bleep.' The name of the Washington football team is disparaging to a large number of my constituents, and he demeans them every day," Reid said, via the [Washington Post](#). "Snyder's tried to bribe some of my folks, buy them little cars."

No idea if that means Mini Coopers, Priuses or your garden-variety clown car. Either way, the *Post* suspects Reid is referring to the [Washington Redskins](#) Original Americans Foundation, [which Snyder created in March 2014](#) to "address the challenges that plague the Native American community."

The Oneida Nation [was unimpressed with the foundation](#).

There's more. From the *Post*:

In October 2014, the Indian National Finals Rodeo, held in Las Vegas, came under fire from some Native American groups for accepting the WROAF as a major sponsor. More recently, a South Dakota tribe's leadership voted to reject a \$25,000 contribution from Snyder's organization.

And in April 2015, the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Tribal Council officially accused Gari Pikyavit Lafferty, chairwoman of the Paiute Indian Tribe, of accepting gifts from the

Redskins and the Original Americans Foundation. Those gifts allegedly included an RG3-signed football and an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC to watch a Redskins game.

Lafferty was stripped of her position.

Meanwhile, Reid's comments about the Redskins nickname came in response to a question about the NFL, Roger Goodell and Deflategate.

"To make this big deal about how much air is in a damn football. I've played a little football, I don't think it makes any difference," Reid said. "And if it did make a difference, what's wrong with Goodell and the National Football League -- check the footballs before they go on the field."

If this sounds familiar it should; here's the Senator back in May:

Direct Link: <http://www.cbssports.com/nfl/eye-on-football/25295666/harry-reid-redskins-owner-dan-snyder-tried-to-bribe-some-native-americans>

Embezzlement trial set for former Chippewa Cree tribe lending executives



19 hours ago

HELENA (AP) — A judge has scheduled a trial next month for two former executives of an online lending company owned by the Chippewa Cree Tribe.

Neal Rosette and Billi Anne Morsette have pleaded not guilty to embezzling more than \$55,000 in tribal funds. Prosecutors say they funneled the money through the lending company, First American Capital Resources, to themselves and former tribal councilman John "Chance" Houle.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris set a Oct. 26 trial date in Great Falls if a plea agreement is not reached by Oct. 12.

Houle is serving a 5 1/2 -year prison sentence under separate embezzlement and tax-evasion plea deal that protects him from future prosecutions.

Rosette and Morsette started with First American in 2010, then played leading roles with the tribe's new online lending company, Plain Green.

Direct Link: http://missoulain.com/news/state-and-regional/embezzlement-trial-set-for-former-chippewa-cree-tribe-lending-executives/article_8c69c174-46db-5cc4-a3f4-a21119c17ff0.html

Proposed Bill Would Save Sacred Native American Site From Mining

It looks like the outrage over selling out a sacred Native American site to a foreign mining company has finally paid off.

[H.R.2811](#), otherwise known as the Save Oak Flat Act, seeks to repeal the provisions under the National Defense Authorization Act that provided for a land exchange between the Department of Agriculture and Resolution Copper Mining, LLC.

The land in question is Oak Flat, a site that holds spiritual significance to the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

Previously, the San Carlos Apache [cited religious freedom](#) in an attempt to protect the land, which includes Apache Leap, where 75 Apache men, women, and children were massacred.

Interestingly enough, it was a champion of “religious freedom” who pushed to allow the foreign mining company to mine the site – [John McCain](#).

He even published an op-ed alongside the rabidly anti-gay Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, titled “Christianity Under Attack” where he advocated for defense of Christian beliefs.

He did not extend this commitment to religious liberty to Native Americans who have since protested his push to sell out Oak Flat in the name of greed.

Maybe that’s why he was [chased out of the Navajo reservation](#).

Indianz.com, a Native American news outlet, [reported on the proposed bill](#) and notes that it has 14 co-sponsors, 11 of which are Democrats.

The bill has been referred to the House Natural Resources Committee and a hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Read more: <http://bluenationreview.com/proposed-bill-would-save-sacred-native-american-site-from-mining/#ixzz3lNFGayOH>

The Native American Dream: Ojibwe Woman Leads Sustainability Movement Off Reservation

[Taté Walker](#)

9/10/15

Raising chickens, rabbits, and goats, and producing enough organic crops to keep a family of three plus friends and neighbors well fed brings to mind hay barns and fields amid a rural landscape.

But the farm-like environment of Monycka Snowbird's property sits in the center of Colorado Springs, a city of more than 440,000 residents. Snowbird and her two daughters butcher their own meat, collect eggs and milk, and make cheeses and soaps in addition to growing and harvesting a variety of vegetation, which flourishes on about a tenth of an acre.

Urban farming—also known as urban homesteading or backyard or micro farming—isn't rare, but what makes Snowbird's endeavors unique is the mix of indigenous knowledge, techniques, and values the Ojibwe mother of two infuses into the food and household products she makes and teaches others to practice.

"You can't be sovereign if you can't feed yourself," says Snowbird, 40, borrowing a line from Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe), an environmental activist and founder of Honor the Earth. "One of the ways colonizers controlled Indian people was to take our food sources away. Let's reclaim our food."

Snowbird works with both Native and non-Native organizations throughout the Pikes Peak region to educate and promote the benefits of urban food production. She leads educational classes for children and adults, including seed cultivation, plant recognition, harvesting, livestock butchering, and more.



© TATÉ WALKER

Bella Snowbird, 11, holds a goat, one of the many animals found on the Snowbird's property in Colorado Springs. (Taté Walker)

Given the staggering rates of poverty, diseases like diabetes, and unemployment for Natives nationwide, Snowbird points to the many economic and health benefits of individuals creating their own energies, whether it's food, fuel and power, or social capital.

"We as indigenous people have gotten farther away from our traditional food sources than anyone else in this country, and I think that's why we have this sort of swelling epidemic of diabetes and obesity in Indian country, because we're losing the knowledge of our traditional foods," says Snowbird.

Returning to traditional roots—in a literal sense—is also what drives Snowbird, who has lived in Colorado Springs for more than 20 years.

"We have to teach our kids it's not just about preserving our cultures and language; it's about restorative stewardship and about knowing where food comes from, who—tribally—it comes from," Snowbird says. "Indigenous food is medicine. And food brings everyone together."

Snowbird earned a reputation as a knowledgeable indigenous educator after she spearheaded a city-wide movement a few years ago to change and educate people on the local laws of urban food production.

Now Snowbird manages the [Colorado Springs Urban Homesteading](#) group, which boasts roughly 1,150 members. Through that group, Snowbird leads several classes every season on animal husbandry, butchering, and more with her fiery brand of wit and know-how.

Perhaps closer to her heart, however, are the lessons she imparts on the city's urban Native youth. Colorado Springs School District 11, in which Snowbird's two daughters (age 11 and 13) are enrolled, has the only Title VII Indian Education Program in the city.

"Monycka is an inspirational parent liaison who has encouraged many students to learn about their culture," says Carolena Jackson (Diné), District 11's Title VII Program Coordinator. "Introducing her own traditions to help students be proud of their cultures has been a natural gift."



Monycka Snowbird serves as a parent liaison to teach students at Colorado Springs School District 11 about her culture. (Taté Walker)

Thanks in large part to Snowbird's efforts, the program has several garden beds and a greenhouse growing traditional Native edibles, including Apache brown-striped sunflower seeds, Navajo robin's egg, Pueblo chiles, and more.

The children also learn to grow, harvest and cook with chokecherries, prickly pears, beans, and other local vegetation.

“She takes time to show students traditional foods and showing them that natural foods are healthy and a part of who they are,” Jackson adds. “Parents and staff are appreciative of her personal time and dedication for the students.”

Re-introducing and re-popularizing indigenous foods and traditional cooking, especially among Native youth, will help strengthen Native people and the communities they live in, Snowbird says.

She points to studies that show food stability, affordability, and access is severely limited for Native communities. According to a report from the [USDA’s Economic Research Service](#) released in December, just 25.6 percent of all tribal areas were within a mile’s distance from a supermarket, compared with 58.8 percent of the total U.S. population.

The latest USDA data also shows 23.5 million people nationwide live in a food desert—their access to a grocery store and healthy, affordable food is limited—and more than half of those people are low-income. Many tribal communities and urban areas with high populations of Native people are considered food deserts.

Snowbird admits maintaining a lifestyle committed to food sovereignty can be hard on her tight budget. However, she says it helps her save and earn money in the long run. Snowbird is able to collect, grow, use and sell or barter with the milk, eggs, meat, vegetables, cleaning and toiletry items, and other useful goods produced on her property.

“I’m not completely self-sufficient by any means. But urban homesteading—or whatever you want to call it—is about as traditional as you can get,” she insists. “It’s living off the land within the radius of where you live and knowing the Creator has put what you need right where you are.”

“I always find it surprising how removed from the whole food process people are; they don’t know or care where their food comes from,” says Snowbird, who harvests edibles on hikes through the mountains or on strolls through downtown. She tries to combat ignorance by giving eggs and other food produced on her property to those who wouldn’t—or couldn’t—normally buy organic in a supermarket.

“Pretty soon those people are asking me for more eggs and then we’re talking about how they can get started with chickens in their backyard or growing herbs on their window sills,” Snowbird says, adding those conversations eventually lead to discussions on indigenous issues, regardless of whether the person is Native or not. “We’re trying to put the culture back in agriculture.”

Writer Taté Walker (Mniconjou Lakota) is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. She is a freelance journalist who lives in Colorado Springs. She can be reached at www.jtatewalker.com or via Twitter [@MissusTWalker](https://twitter.com/MissusTWalker).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/09/10/native-american-dream-ojibwe-woman-leads-sustainability-movement-reservation-161680>

Indian Health Services offering free mammograms to Native Americans



Karen Schooler, radiology technician; and Denise Badger, lead registered nurse for SD Urban Indian Health; show off the mammography machine that is in town through Friday.

Posted: Wednesday, September 9, 2015 10:44 pm

By Lee Zion Lee.zion@capjournal.com

For the rest of the week, Native American women in and around Pierre will have an opportunity to get a mammogram — for free.

Indian Health Services is hosting a mammogram van, which arrived Wednesday and will be on site through Friday. Look for it at the SD Urban Indian Health Administration office, just west of Pierre Mall on Fourth Street.

About 25 women are scheduled to attend over the three days. These are Native American women, between the ages of 40 and 49, who do not have insurance, said Denise Badger, the lead registered nurse with SD Urban Indian Health.

Indian Health targeted that age group because mammograms are recommended for women 40 and above. Meanwhile, women 50 and above already qualify for free mammograms under the All Women Count! program from the state of South Dakota.

“But there’s that age group between 40 to 49, and if they don’t have insurance, a lot of them won’t get that mammograms, which are recommended in that age group,” she said.

Badger said that this van is for Native American women only. Last month, the health office sponsored a van from Avera, which was open to all women ages 40 to 49. That van will return to the area sometime next year, she said.

Why a mammogram?

Doctors have always stressed the importance of mammograms, Badger said.

“They suggest that women age 40 and up have a mammogram to rule out cancer,” she said. “Our plan here is that every woman should have that every year, once they reach that 40-year-old age.”

Badger’s office stressed that when women don’t have insurance, they might skip a mammogram. And then, crucial signs might be missed.

Last year, when the van came through the area, two women had warning signs. In both cases, they turned out all right, but this shows the need for preventive care, she said.

“Early detection is the best,” she said.

Karen Schooler, radiology technician, said the van visit is part of a six-month contract, from April through the end of September. The van is scheduled to visit 18 sites in North and South Dakota offering mammograms to anyone who is enrolled in a tribe.

Pierre is the 16th site this year, she said.

Since the beginning of April, Schooler has traveled about 12,000 miles.

Schooler urged women to come.

“We may know that we need it, but it’s not at the top of our fun to-do list,” she said. “It does save lives.”

Breast cancer happens a lot less often than it used to, but that’s because women are getting mammograms, she said.

It doesn’t hurt!

Schooler added that the equipment nowadays is digital, which means it can get a better picture of the breast without having to put the women through any discomfort. Earlier machines put women through pain and discomfort — which discouraged women from getting screened.

Not anymore. And it’s crucial that women know this, she said.

“Once the reputation gets out, that ‘Hey, that didn’t hurt! Why didn’t it hurt?’” Schooler said. “Many women will say, ‘How long are you going to be here? Because I have a friend or a family member that I’m gonna call, because they haven’t gone for several years because of that.’”

Although 25 women are scheduled over the next three days, the van has room for more. A community health representative can pick up women who do not have transportation, Badger said.

The mammogram van at the site this week is available only to women who are in the SD Urban Indian Health Administration system. Women can enroll; however, it may be difficult to enroll people and then provide the mammogram on the same day, she said.

For more information, call 224-8841, then select option 2.

Direct Link: http://www.capjournal.com/news/indian-health-services-offering-free-mammograms-to-native-americans/article_4982e524-576e-11e5-83cb-ab67756448b8.html

Indigenous Australians may soon lose ancestral land

Facing the biggest threat to their way of life in decades, indigenous communities may be forced off their homelands.

[101 East](#) | 10 Sep 2015 09:21 GMT

Western Australia, Australia - The arid, rural territory of Western Australia is home to over 270 remote indigenous Australian communities that live on their ancestral land. This

land has sustained the oldest living culture for over 50,000 years and carries deep spiritual and cultural significance for the people living there today.

Yet many of these communities are now under threat. They may soon be shut down by the state government, and hundreds of Aborigines could be forced to leave terrain they consider sacred and which is integral to their way of life.

In November 2014, the state premier, Colin Barnett, said the Western Australian government planned to cut essential services to up to 150 of these communities. The government says maintaining them is too costly, but they also say their closure will help tackle social problems like substance abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence and the sexual abuse of children, which they claim is widespread across indigenous communities.

Aboriginal leaders and human rights organisations say the communities have a right to stay on their land and accuse the government of racism.

Critics say the government's plans are yet another example of politicians excluding the Aboriginal people from the decision-making processes that will affect their future and that the plan will only exacerbate the problems that affect these fragile societies. Indigenous leaders say community reforms must be led by their own people.

This isn't the first time the Western Australian government tried to address social ills by shutting down communities.

[Oombulgurri](#), in the state's north, was gradually closed after a coronial inquiry found high rates of domestic violence, child sexual abuse and alcoholism. First the shop went, then the health centre, which forced the sick and elderly to move away, and then the school. The last remaining residents were evicted in 2011.

Most of the buildings were bulldozed in November 2014. The site remains home to several sacred, ancient, Aboriginal sites.

Since its closure, most of the children who lived there have not returned to school, and youth suicides - cited by the government as a reason to close the town - have increased.

A 2011 Amnesty report found that the mortality rate for Aboriginal people living in urban areas was far higher than those living on ancestral lands. Some of Oombulgurri's former residents are now homeless.

While the future of Western Australia's indigenous communities remains uncertain, Aboriginal community organisers say the closure of these communities will bring social chaos and looking back on past policies, this plan could augur yet another lost generation of indigenous Australians.

For more: 101 East meets the indigenous people facing the closure of their communities in "[Waiting for Eviction](#)."

Direct Link: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/09/indigenous-australians-lose-ancestral-land-150904105812729.html>